NAZI INFLUENCE ON CHRISTIAN LIFE IN GERMANY

by

JANET WILKINS

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INTRODUCTION

Although Naziism was generally considered to be the program of a political party, its influence was felt in all parts of German life. The purpose of this paper is to examine the effect of Hitler's National Socialism on one phase of German culture: religion. Since the great majority of Germans are at least nominally Christian, this investigation has been aimed at the reaction of Christians, both as an organized Church and as individuals.

It is not the author's intention to indicate that this sector of life can be successfully isolated from other spheres of interest and endeavor, but, for the purposes of this study, a minimum of reference is made to concurrent events.

The study begins with the ideas leading to the Nazi-Christian conflict, tracing their evolution into opposing ideologies. Because the Nazis took the initiative, their attempt to unify Germany as a racially pure and dominant power is presented as the offensive. The Christian reaction, optimistically titled Counter-Attack, includes only the period of Nazi ascendancy, with a few brief speculations on the more permanent effects.

Since the Nazi period is comparatively recent, one major obstacle to objective research was the lack of reliable sources. Even those authors who attempted an unbiased presentation unconsciously weighted their evidence, perhaps due to limitations in experience and perspective.

Another detriment was the author's elementary knowledge of the German language, which did not encourage the perusal of lengthy and complex writings in their original forms.

With these limitations taken into account, it is to be hoped that this study can make some contribution to the successive efforts to analyze the effect of National Socialism on the thought and conduct of the German people.

CHAPTER I

THE SEEDS OF CONFLICT

We have captured all the positions
And on the heights we have planted
The banners
Of our revolution.
   You had imagined
   That was all
   That we wanted.
We want more.
We want all!
Your hearts are our goal,
It's your souls we want![1]

The above poem clearly illustrates the aspirations of the Nazi leaders during the late 1930's. At that time the essentially anti-Christian nature of their program became clear, as they abandoned the policy of lip service to Christian ideals and institutions.

Logically, this study of philosophical and spiritual forces in action against each other begins with a look at the evolution and nature of each competitor in the battle for control of men's loyalties. Both Naziism and Christianity have deep roots in German history and culture. That two concepts so strongly in opposition could be powerful simultaneously is one of the mysteries of the German personality.

For clarity, it is essential that the reader understand that the presentation of ideas anticipating Naziism is not

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[1] Stewart W. Herman, Jr., It's Your Souls We Want (New York, 1943), p. 3.

purely an attempt to indicate what objective historians have found to be true. Instead, selections have been taken from the theories of men whom the Nazis credited with laying the groundwork for the way of life they put into action.

To Christian thought, and from it Western thought, the individual is sacred. To German thought, the individual is imperfect. Obviously, Christian theology is also based on the imperfectness of man, but it finds in Christ a possibility of casting off the old, imperfect man in favor of the new man, perfect in the sight of God.

In sharp contrast, the traditional German tendency is to emphasize individual imperfections and compensate for them by means of a strict impersonal organization. This organization is given meaning and direction by a leader, who, in contrast to the common man, is a master egoist. The ordinary individual exists only to serve the group personified by the leader. More specifically, the citizen exists for the sake of the state, which is responsible for doing what is right for the benefit of its citizens.[2]

In establishing their system of thought, Germans have drawn up several speculative principles. They believe in rule of the many by the abler few. They make the assertion that blood will tell. They envision a community bound by

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[2] Rohan D'O. Butler, The Roots of National Socialism (New York, 1942), pp. 288-92.

ties closer and more sacred than the bonds based upon material things, a community in which all work for all and efficiency finds its just reward.

Their thinking is based upon the idea of a dynamic society which moves with the sweep of life itself, structured by a supernatural order which is inspired by the splendid scope of its undertaking. They look for philosophy to be made real in politics. They anticipate the discovery of a new faith to carry on where Christianity has left off and to elevate mankind to nobler achievements and a higher destiny.[3]

These concepts raise several questions. How did the Germans get this way? How does the German mind work?

It is evident that the German traits seized upon by the National Socialist Party did not arise abruptly with the coming of Hitler. It has frequehtly been suggested that Naziism was the child of Prussianism and Romanticism.[4] Assuming this to be so, it is historically true that Prussianism existed before the Romanticists made their impact on Western thought, and it is evident that the Nazi ideology resulted from an attempt to absorb the fruits of Romantic theory into the Prussian way of life.

Prussianism was to many Germans a symbol of the highest type of living. It involved a disciplined life in which

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[3] Ibid., p. 287.
[4] Peter Viereck, Metapolitics from the Romantics to Hitler (New York, 1941), p. 311.

strength, duty and honor were the ideals. But it was more than a code of personal ethics. Prussianism involved a political framework in which monarchy, the concept of political inequality, and power politics were given force by militarism, discipline, and ardent patriotism. In the economic sphere a feudal estate system carried through these basic principles. Strength and adherence to leadership were fundamental. Even religious faith and practice was tied to the inherent conservatism and supremacy of the state.

In a country where such a concept of life was held in high esteem it was inevitable that a strong Romantic movement would have rather unusual results.

The German Romantic movement was based on the theories of August Wilhelm and Friedrich Schlegel. They held sacred the right of genius to follow its natural inclination. The Romanticists generally sought new ways of expressing the unreasoned truths they felt. Some German Romanticists idealized German history; others were more realistic in their commentary. But they combined to strengthen the national and patriotic spirit of their people.[5]

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[5] "German Literature," Encyclopedia Britanica, 10:225-6.

Of the German Romanticists,[6] Johann Gottlieb Fichte stands out as a forerunner of Naziism by virtue of several beliefs. To him the Germans were the original, ancient race which was destined to form a model nation. In that nation the individual would surrender to and be absorbed by the whole; its leader would be followed without question. The state would be exalted and eternal. All education would be controlled by the state; the prominence of intellectualism in education would cease.[7] Fichte maintained that German culture was paramount, and, therefore, Jewish cultural influences were to be condemned.[8]

It is probable that Fichte's vision of a German Utopia in which nationalism and religion were united was a quest for a "religion of German ideals" rather than traditional Christianity.[9] He believed in state control of the economic

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6 Several German Romanticists and their successors have been used as sources by the Nazis. It is only fair to add here that the ideas taken over by Hitler and Rosenberg were frequently taken out of context or otherwise misinterpreted. It is highly unlikely that any of the individuals who are cited as fathers of Nazi thinking would have joined that Nazi ranks. Also, several - Wagner and Nietzache in particular - in later life realized the logical ends of their assertions and established boundary conditions which have been ignored in the twentieth century. But it is true that German thinkers of the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries believed in elements of what came to be the Nazi way of life.

7 George Frederick Kneller, The Educational Philosophy of National Socialism (New Haven, 1941), pp. 89-90.

8 Kurt London, Backgrounds of Conflict: Ideas and Forms in World Politics (New York, 1945), p. 49.

9 Salo Wittmayer Baron, Modern Nationalism and Religion (New York, 1947), pp. 46-8.

life of individuals and endorsed the idea of securing "natural frontiers," though this was to be accomplished without bloodshed. His belief in the totality of the ego,[10] especially the German ego, allowed him to make a virtue of Germany's retarded political growth, seeing in it the possibility of renewal, of a new era in universal history.[11]

Johann Gottfried von Herder, like Fichte, was a Romanticist who emphasized German nationalism. He comprehended the state in terms of one class - the Folk,[12] which became the basis of the state, replacing the Prussian absolutism and militarism he hated.[13] In the philosophical realm, he made an attempt to harmonize emotion with reason in terms of unconscious matter and a perfectly conscious God, with a hierarchy of simple organisms or beings in grades between the perfectly conscious and unconscious.[14] Thus Herder attested to the general Romantic belief that a new faith was needed to serve a unified Germany.[15]

Following the Romantic period, which Butler reasonably cuts off at 1815, there was a period of reaction lasting until the collapse of what appeared to be a genuine liberal movement in 1848. Ranke, Hegel, Arndt, Jahn, Mueller, Clausewitz and Haller fall into this time span.

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10 Butler, The Roots of National Socialism, pp. 36-42.
11 Edmond Vermeil, "The Origin, Nature and Development of German Nationalist Ideology in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," article in Baumont, Fried, Vermeil (ed.), The Third Reich (New York, 1955), p. 31.
12 Butler, The Roots of National Socialism, p. 25.
13 London, Backgrounds of Conflict, p. 54.
14 Butler, The Roots of National Socialism, p. 27.
15 Ibid., p. 65.

These men equated national unity with Pan-Germanism.[16] The historian Leopold von Ranke emphasized the unity of Germany and the importance of military strength, while pleading for strengthening of German folk culture.[17] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel defied the state, made power all-important, and put the military at the top - above morality.[18] He taught the supremacy of Germanity, and tied it closely to the idea of a moment in history reserved for each nation.

Along the same lines, Ernst Moritz Arndt spoke of Geist der Zeit and looked forward to the time when Germany would be supreme.[19] Friedrich Ludwig Jahn, the ardent nationalist and back-to-nature advocate, favored a German church of "Northern Christianity" to replace the existing church.[20] By means of his gymnast societies he sought to build up a strong race which would surmount class barriers and lead a popular resistance movement against existing decadence.[21]

Another political theorist of the period, Adam Mueller, thought of the state as a person whose unity in all phases was essential. Land, labor, and capital for him became nature, man, and the past; the Folk was the exalted community

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16 Ibid., p. 93.
17 Ibid., p. 87.
18 London, Backgrounds of Conflict, p. 53.
19 Butler, The Roots of National Socialism, p. 68.
20 London, Backgrounds of Conflict, p. 55
21 Vermeil, "The Origin, Nature and Development of German Nationalist Ideology in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," Baumont et al. (ed.), The Third Reich, p. 38.

uniting past and present.[22]

To Carl von Clausewitz expedience was the only limit to the extent of war; the idea of total war was logical because "war is an act of force and there are no limits in the use of the same."[23] Karl Ludwig von Haller dismissed the teaching of natural law, favoring instead the theory of contract between ruler and ruled which Fichte had rejected. The relationship between ruler and ruled rested on the "eternal unalterable ordering of God that the more powerful should rule, must rule, and always will rule."[24]

Though varying in thoughts and beliefs all these men shared a common conviction in identifying unity with uniformity. They stressed the individual duty to lay aside personal differences. It is easy to see the tie between ideas expressed in this period and in the 1930's.

Following the 1848 attempt to realize a new political way of life there was a gathering of forces leading up to German unification and establishment of an empire. The exponents of German liberalism laid aside for a time their liberal creed and turned to the Prussian military leadership for strength and direction to achieve unification. No other German state was sufficiently strong or willing to assume the guiding position. None was capable of effectively opposing

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22 Butler, The Roots of National Socialism, pp. 70-1.
23 Ibid., p. 97.
24 Ibid., p. 94.

Prussia's rise to German supremacy through power politics in the 1860's. The unification thus achieved involved a sacrifice of liberalism in the interests of nationalism.

During the period leading up to unification in 1871, a new school of thought profoundly influenced German Weltanschauung. The ideas of the English naturalist Charles Darwin appealed to Germans, tying in readily with the German stress on the vigor of the Folk. The publication of The Origin of Species in 1859 initiated a questioning of assumptions which had not previously been subjected to doubt. The survival concept, with its emphasis on the inequalities among men, was frequently set against the Christian belief in the equality of all men before God.

The Frenchman Arthur de Gobineau wrote about the weakness and degeneracy of humanity, and pointed out that struggle was necessary for vitality. To him the white man was the source of civilizations, and the Aryan[25] was the best of the white men.[26]

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25 The meaning of the word "Aryan" was completely distorted by the Nazis. The following commentary is enlightening.

> There is no "Aryan" race. The word "aryan" comes from the Sanscrit and was used originally by Sir William Jones (1746-1794) to designate a group of Indian languages. Subsequently, the German scholar Frederick Max Mueller (1823-1900) extended the term to include linguistic groups of Central Asia. Mueller seems first to have used the term "Aryan race" which was readily adopted and widely misused in England and Germany, much to Mueller's discomfiture. There is certainly no Aryan race today nor is there such a thing as a German "race," from an anthropological point of view.

Quoted in London, Backgrounds of Conflict, p. 60.

26 Butler, The Roots of National Socialism, pp. 135-8.

At the same time Richard Wagner wrote his supposedly Romantic works of art, making Germanity and racial purity his goals in music and the written word. His "Parzival" was an incarnation of spirit recognizing two powers: knowledge and suffering.[27] His "Ring" operas glorified the old German pagan gods. Wagner felt that Germans needed to understand foreign culture "germanly." He was convinced that the true spirit of Christianity had been destroyed by the Church.[28]

In the spirit of the times, Heinrich von Treitschke followed the Machievellian idea that right and virtue should be sacrificed to a great idea.[29] His great idea was the national state, to be achieved by the unity of Germany under Prussia. He extolled military virtues and saw the state as the embodiment of force. To him the state was superior to the standards of private morality; it should be the final arbiter in all matters pertaining to religion. He was prejudiced against Jews, small nations, Socialists, materialists, and capitalists. Significantly, he viewed war as a moral good, as a remedy for an ailing nation and an opportunity to sacrifice for a great patriotic idea.[30]

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27 Paul Banwell Means, Things That Are Caesar's: The Genesis of the German Church Conflict (New York, 1935), p. 59.
28 Butler, The Roots of National Socialism, p. 142.
29 Ibid., p. 146.
30 London, Backgrounds of Conflict, pp. 55-7.

But Treitschke came to be less influential than Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, with his later misinterpreted vision of the superman. He believed that where there is life there is will, and will leads to power. A few quotes from his writing, in the form of maxims of his prophet Zarathustra, help to clarify his position.

> This new table, my brethren, I put up for you: Become hard!
>
> A man of enlightenment must be able not only to love his enemies, but to hate his friends.
>
> Man must be trained for war, and woman for the relaxation of the warrior; all else is folly.
>
> Ye should love peace as a means to new war; and the short peace more than the long. I do not exhort you to work, but to fight.
>
> Ye say that a good cause will even sanctify war! I tell you, it is a good war that sanctifies every cause.[31]

To Nietzsche, the natural rights to live, work and be happy did not exist, for in these respects man was not different from "the meanest worm."[32] He tried to replace the Christian God, conception of man, and doctrine of salvation with his own doctrine of the Superman. This doctrine was to rise above Christian ethics, which he considered slave morality, and deal with impulsive, unreasoning life, which to him was the only reality.[33] Nietzsche claimed the

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31 Butler, The Roots of National Socialism, p. 159.
32 Ibid., p. 161.
33 Means, Things That Are Caesar's, p. 61.

pagan faith to be supreme, and recognized no absolute. It is interesting that he considered the Germans cowards in the face of reality; he claimed that their idealism caused them to have crimes against culture on their consciences.[34]

The major step of political unification, which had been so strongly advocated by most German theorists of the nineteenth century, was achieved by the active genius of Otto von Bismarck. While Bismarck was not much of a theorist, it is obvious that his thinking and actions did much to mold the twentieth century German personality. Of particular importance was the dualism he practiced in his life, revealing entirely separate systems of ethics on public and private matters. He was a conservative aristocrat who hated the Catholic Center Party for its democratic views[35] and waged a much-publicized Kulturkampf against the German Catholics in the years 1873 to 1883. Bismarck's habits forcefully showed the post-1870 tendency of Germans to act under the influence of two souls: the soul of poetry and thought Germany always had; the new soul of combat and mastery.[36]

Other political thinkers of the late nineteenth century contributed bits to the fabric of thought which was nearing wholeness. Paul de Lagarde had such a strong sense of German

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[34] Butler, The Roots of National Socialism, p. 155
[35] William Ebenstein, The Nazi State (New York, 1943), p. 218.
[36] Kneller, The Educational Philosophy of National Socialism, p. 101.

nationality that he vigorously rejected all international groups.[37] He sought a greater Germany whose racially pure inhabitants would embrace the true Christianity in conformity with German folk ideals.[38] Arthur Bonus, a former Lutheran pastor, spoke of the "creation of a new myth" containing worship of Wotan and naturalistic thinking.[39] During the '90's, the free-lance clergyman Johannes Mueller called the Germans back to nature. To him religious activity and church services were unnecessary; the only necessities of Christianity were God and man, with Jesus as truth and life.[40] The popular court preacher Adolf Stoecker spoke against Jews, bankers, and capitalists.[41] Eugen Duehring, a University of Berlin professor, emphasized will rather than knowledge and berated Jews as instruments of corruption, whose power must be broken.[42] Thus a variety of intellectually inclined Germans expressed discontent with the status quo and looked for a regeneration.

Close to the turn of the century, the Englishman Houston Stewart Chamberlain became intoxicated with Germany and Germanity. Remembered especially for his Foundations of the Nineteenth Century, he was concerned primarily with race and its effect on character. To him the Jew was not inferior

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37 Means, Things That Are Caesar's, p. 64.
38 Butler, The Roots of National Socialism, p. 167.
39 Means, Things That Are Caesar's, p. 68.
40 Ibid., pp. 110-1.
41 Butler, The Roots of National Socialism, p. 176.
42 Ibid., pp. 177-83.

to the Teuton (though Teutons were racially superior), but he was different; he was even to be admired for guarding the purity of his race. However, Jews and some Catholics needed supervision and were to be excluded from common law as foreigners and traitors to Germany. He formulated five fundamental laws for the birth and expansion of a race. These were all-important because race was the only meaningful factor in life.

He based his conception of race upon intuitive belief rather than rational proof. For Chamberlain knowledge had the effect of paralyzing life; he replaced science with intuition and considered experience the supreme understanding. He made contradictory statements concerning the determining factors of race - whether they were physical or moral - and thereby was able to include or exclude individuals largely according to personal preference. By rather shaky reasoning Chamberlain managed to convince himself (and many others) that Jesus was not a Jew. This made it possible for him to accept agreeable parts of the story of Jesus and the message he proclaimed.[43]

Chamberlain lived to see in Hitler the possibility of fulfillment of his ideas. But much had happened between the

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[43] Jean Real's "The Religious Conception of Race: Houston Stewart Chamberlain and Germanic Christianity," an article in Baumont, et al. (ed.), The Third Reich, pp. 249-83, provided the basic material on Chamberlain.

time he wrote his principal work and the rise of Hitler. In 1913 the philosopher Rudolf Steiner founded anthroposophy, or the "spiritual science of man," on the assumption that man's latent capacities could be developed by discipline.[44] Alfred von Tirpitz proclaimed the need for expansionist foreign policy and inspired the growth of a series of patriotic bodies: Colonial League, Navy League, All-German Association, Pan-German League.[45] Karl Lamprecht pictured education as excellent national propaganda.[46] War was found indispensable to life and culture by Friedrich von Bernhardi.[47]

Friedrich Naumann conceived of Germany as the power to dominate central Europe, in keeping with his idea of Mittel Europa. He had worked with Stoecker to promote the Christian social movement, but broke with him by favoring a democratic-proletarian basis for their party. The following quotations from his later view of the state indicate his disillusionment after early hopes of using Christian principles in practical politics:

> The state is pagan, its demands are pagan, but not on that account immoral . . . It is another ethic as inevitable as the Christian ethic is.
>
> Christianity must not attempt to mold the state nor demand civilization.

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[44] Means, Things That Are Caesar's, p. 113.
[45] Butler, The Roots of National Socialism, pp. 188-92.
[46] Ibid., p. 195.
[47] Ibid., p. 197.

> The future of the German world in particular depends on the preservation of the military sense within the race.[48]

With mention of several clergymen as contributors to the stream of thought which developed into Naziism, it is appropriate to question the role of the Church as a German institution and concepts associated with the Christian faith.

Since the advent of the modern states there has been a marked tendency for nationalism to displace religion as the chief factor in human group relationships. And, as was inevitable, religion eventually forced nationalism to take a stand.[49] For Germany this conflict has been alive since the time of the Reformation which divided Western Christianity into two parts. Luther tried vainly to evolve a workable relationship between church and state which would ensure the proper functioning of each. His distinction between the inner man and the outer man permitted him to approve a system making the landed aristocrat the head of the local Church. It also made side-stepping the religious issue convenient for Socialists and others not wishing to commit themselves, for they referred to religion as a private affair.

This artificial dishotomy helped to produce a deep-seated antagonism between the practical man or technician and the thinker or philosopher,[50] which in turn made the universities

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48 Means, Things That Are Caesar's, p. 36.
49 Baron, Modern Nationalism and Religion, pp. 7, 23.
50 Vermeil, "The Origin, Nature and Development of German Nationalist Ideology in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," Baumont et al. (ed.), The Third Reich, p. 11.

and churches divorce themselves from everyday life in Germany. This gap was quite evident in the nineteenth century German church.

To get an over-all picture of the German Church, some general information is helpful. Since the Reformation Germany has been approximately two-thirds Lutheran and one-third Catholic; Lutheranism is predominant in northern and eastern Germany, especially Prussia, and Catholicism is strong in southern and western Germany, particularly Bavaria. In both cases, because of the Peace of Augsburg in 1555, the religion of the individual was largely dependent upon the religion of the state prince, who, notably in the Lutheran sections, was also the top official of the state church.

There was a definite bond in the mind of the German between the concepts of church and state, emphasized by the fact that each state collected taxes for the maintenance of its established church.[51] Payment of this church tax was considered a normal and legitimate procedure. Tithing was considered fantastic, though free-will offerings were taken to finance a sizeable program of foreign missionary work.[52]

In most areas the churches were dead to the life around them. Only one-tenth of the nominal Christians were active.

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[51] Herman, It's Your Souls We Want, p. 104.

[52] Stewart W. Herman, Report from Christian Europe (New York, 1953), pp. 7-10.

As was generally true of European Churches, German Churches were hampered by institutionalism and institutional thinking. They found themselves in the position of defending the status quo. There was a tendency to view the existing order as unalterable.

Until the middle of the nineteenth century the landed aristocrat was the local supervisor in Protestant church government. The absolutism practiced in state government carried over to the Church. Both institutions were given unchallenged allegiance.

Professor Delekat of Stuttgart maintains that the adoption of the State Church plan had been just a temporary expedient for Luther. In his opinion, the Church failed in not finding a better solution to the question of Church and state when the opportunity arose in the new political and social thinking of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[53]

The Church was seen as an institution which satisfied family spiritual needs but was not related to the cold facts of the working world. The social conscience of the Christian Church did not develop fast enough to meet existing needs. What little Christian service was undertaken was almost entirely remedial, emergency help, to the exclusion of any

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[53] Stewart W. Herman, The Rebirth of the German Church (London, 1946), p. 163.

constructive efforts. There was so much emphasis on social evils that there was difficulty in focusing attention on "the social good." Social maladies like industrial slum areas were generally deplored by the Church, but they were not attributed to any fault in the structure of society, and the Church did not advocate mass reforms.[54]

The wide breach between political and religious responsibility was related to the gap between the theoretical and the practical, which was traced to Luther.[55] Unquestioning obedience to political authority and the presence of inner freedom in spite of outward bondage were basic to Lutheran belief and practice. However, "religious conscience must not be violated . . . .Any restriction of the freedom of conscience constitutes an attack on the fundamental principle of Christian Natural Law."[56] It was not considered to be the function of the Church to transform society according to Christian ideas, but rather to save individual souls.[57] This was in keeping with Luther's distinction between the work and the doer, whereby one could be good without the other.[58]

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54 Herman, Report from Christian Europe, pp. 59, 60, 72.

55 It is important to note when discussing Luther that fundamentally different concepts have been attributed to him by various interpreters. In this case, the interpretation which seemed to be generally accepted, and therefore influential, is being outlined.

56 Ernst Fraenkel, The Dual State: A Contribution to the Theory of Dictatorship (New York, 1941), p. 116.

57 Means, Things That Are Caesar's, p. 2.

58 Franz Newmann, Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism (New York, 1942), p. 88.

Not all German Protestants were Lutherans. The followers of Calvin in the Reformed churches were more inclined to seek improvement through political reforms. Calvin had stated that election to grace was signified by a person's success in his vocation, and that the successful were to be obeyed. In politics this meant that the king was under obligation to God only. But he allowed room for the rise of a leader to deliver the people - a saviour whom God had authorized to overthrow the state and free the people when necessary.[59] This frequently overlooked point of difference was one of the few discrepancies between Calvinism and Lutheranism as they were practiced early in the twentieth century.

Perhaps both Germany and Christianity would have benefitted from a stronger group of noncomformist Protestants. As it was, the free churches and sects were too small and scattered to contribute significantly to the over-all picture. These sects might have given competition to budding Naziism by their emphasis on improving social and economic conditions, for they believed in the perfectibility of man and worked wholeheartedly to realize this goal.[60]

Although the Protestant Church was generally guilty of failing its people in time of need, there were a few quasi-official attempts to speak to the distress of a rapidly

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59 Ibid., pp. 90-2.

60 Fraenkel, The Dual State, p. 116.

changing Germany. In 1849, Pastor Johann Hinrich Wichern founded the Inner Mission in an attempt to "accomplish a rebirth of all social relationships."[61] It was hampered in its activity by the danger of being connected with political movements between 1875 and 1890, but it re-expanded its work between 1890 and 1914, including in its program evangelization, philanthropic activity, and public ministry.[62]

In 1883 "Father" von Bodelschwingh founded the institution for various types of abnormal persons at Bethel in Hamburg.[63] Several other institutions of a purely social nature were started during this period. As an outgrowth of the Christian Socialist movement, Adolf von Harnack instigated discussions which brought together pastors and labor leaders to promote enlightened understanding.[64] The theologian Ernst Troeltsch helped to cultivate the social consciences of liberal church men.[65]

The Catholics were ahead of the Protestants in their awareness of social problems and what should be done to alleviate the ensuing misery. Bishop Ketteler of Mainz had lived as a poor workman for some years before he became a

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61 Means, Things That Are Caesar's, p. 30.
62 Ibid., p. 37.
63 Ibid., p. 31.
64 Ibid., p. 37.
65 Ibid., pp. 51-4.

priest, and his sermons and exhortations both to his fellow clergymen and to the capitalists to alleviate such distress were quite influential.[66]

More concrete work was done by Father Kolping, who in 1849 founded the Gesellverein in Cologne, along the lines of the Young Workmen's Society he had worked with in his Elberfeld parish. He not only expanded the scope of this journeymen's haven, but he carried the idea to other industrial centers, where similar groups were formed for young, single apprentices and journeymen. By 1910 about 360 of the 1170 branches had houses, and 195 had local sick funds plus the general burial fund. The program of each local involved a house or housing arrangements and a travel fund for journeymen, with instruction available in technical subjects as well as religious principles.[67]

The Catholic situation was also somewhat different in regard to the church and state question. In accordance with the international nature of the Catholic Church, with a Pope recognized as the spiritual father of citizens of many nations, little support was given to any national group. It must be remembered that through the middle ages the Pope

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66 "Ketteler, Wilhelm Emmanuel," The Catholic Encyclopedia: An International Work of Reference on the Contribution, Doctrine, Discipline, and History of the Catholic Church, 8:630.

67 "Gesellverein," The Catholic Encyclopedia, 6:538.

was a temporal as well as a spiritual leader, and some Catholics still clung to the idea of Papal supremacy over state rulers.

But most Catholics accepted the situation and adapted themselves to it. They used their spiritual and material resources to strengthen their Church, concentrating on parochial schools and religious orders. Bismarck's Kulturkampf, which directed a series of legislation against the separatism and resistance to secularization by the Catholics, produced only a temporary setback in these endeavors. The Center Party, which rose about the time of the unification, upheld Catholic interests in the Reichstag, using its recurrent possession of the balance of power to advantage.[68]

Although it is obvious that some effort was made to bring religion up to date, the results were not sufficient, at least in the eyes of the German people. Religion was not a vital force speaking to everyday life. After 1900, and particularly following World War I, political, economic, and social reform groups agitated for rejection of church membership on the ground that the reforms being enacted would make life pleasant and thereby abolish the need for religion, with its opportunity to escape reality.[69]

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68 Nathaniel Micklem, National Socialism and the Roman Catholic Church (London, 1939), p. 57.

69 Means, Things That Are Caesar's, p. 27.

CHAPTER II

PRELIMINARY SKIRMISHES

Germany's great industrial and commercial expansion of the late 1800's was accompanied by a vigorous foreign and colonial policy under Kaiser William II. The desire for continued growth of German economic strength contributed to the world tension which resulted in World War I.

The German people made impressive sacrifices, hoping to win that war. They threw their physical and spiritual forces wholeheartedly into the contest. Maintaining the support it had given German absolutism since its founding, Protestantism backed the throne and the Fatherland to the end. When the nation received the stunning blow of defeat, Protestantism, and Christianity in general, was severely wounded.[1]

The Kaiser, who was generally credited with responsibility for the costly and exhaustive war, lost the respect of many of his people. In 1918 revolution was in the air as the Navy mutinied and the Communist-inspired Sparticists tried to take advantage of the situation to overthrow the government. Finally the Kaiser fled to Holland and left the Socialists primary responsibility in dealing with the victorious Allies.

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[1] Means, Things That Are Caesar's, p. 82.

The Socialists attempted to liberalize the German government and make it more democratic. They tried to use the postwar chaos, in which everything which had been accepted previously was subjected to skeptical questioning,[2] to establish a new type of political life in Germany. The majority group worked for the adoption of mildly Socialistic measures through parliamentary channels.

But the government's attempt to proceed by peaceful democratic methods was made difficult by the economic crises and recurrent evidences of unrest. Each reparations payment decreased the purchasing power of the average German. Protests against the policy of fulfilling the peace treaty became increasingly frequent. The Kapp Putsch of 1920, which expressed the dissatisfaction of many German war veterans, was a premature but significant indication that Prussianism was not dead. Hitler's Munich Putsch in 1923 came remarkably close to succeeding. Political assassinations, such as those of Matthias Erzberger, the Centrist leader, and the industrialist Walter Rathenau indicated strong dissatisfaction with the liberal attempt to enable Germany to honorably re-establish herself as a sovereign nation. Hunger and unemployment, inflation and moral laxity reached dangerous proportions by the end of 1923.[3]

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2 Ibid., p. 82.
3 Butler, The Roots of National Socialism, pp. 220-9.

In these troubled times the Church was also undergoing a period of questioning. Many Protestants had associated the Church with imperial rule; they felt that Christianity had forfeited its right to be the German religion because it had failed the nation in war and allowed "Christian" nations to impose the "unchristian" Treaty of Versailles on the "helpless losers."[4]

However, after a temporary alienation, most Germans renewed their faith in the Church and Christian doctrines. The Inner Mission and the YMCA found many people interested in their activities during the 1920's.[5] In the Christian Fellowship, which grew out of Steiner's anthroposophy, some Germans found a Christ-inspired synthesis to meet individual and contemporary cultural crises by purification of modern civilization as well as modern Christianity.[6]

Those churchmen who tried to provide an up-to-date Christianity varied in their approaches. Some favored a form of neo-mysticism such as the Christian Fellowship utilized, with an adaptation of High Church forms, and a cosmology involving identification of Christ with the Sun on the bases of life, light, and love. Others formed Religious-Social movements which tried to interpret Christianity in new terms, corresponding to conditions as they saw them. Dialectical

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[4] Herman, It's Your Souls We Want, p. 240.
[5] Means, Things That Are Caesar's, pp. 83-9.
[6] Ibid., pp. 114-8.

theology originated in the Swiss Religious-Social movement and was given impetus and direction by Karl Barth. He changed the stress from building the kingdom concerned with reality, to the Word, coming through revelation and by faith, as the basis for contemplation of reality. Another group made an attempt to re-evaluate Luther and thereby establish neo-Lutheranism. This involved emphasizing Luther the German patriot rather than Luther the prophet.[7]

But the clergy had difficulty trying to keep up with the troubled times. In addition to the general postwar declericalization there were sharp differences within the ranks of clergymen. The older clergy was rightist and the younger clergy sympathetic to leftist thinking. Since the older men, uncritical of the evils of capitalism, were in control, pastors joining the Social Democratic Party were boycotted and those joining the Communist Party were excommunicated. Protestant Churches generally opposed a Republic based on a loose alliance of Catholics and Socialists.[8] This was in spite of the fact that Social Democracy in power had proved itself much less radical than Social Democracy in the position of revolutionary opposition.[9]

Even the scattered indications of renewed life in the Church were misleading. While Christianity was gaining a

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7 Ibid., pp. 114-51.
8 Ebenstein, The Nazi State, p. 213.
9 Means, Things That Are Caesar's, pp. 93-6.

little strength, competing forces were gaining much more strength. The Socialists and Liberals achieved a partial separation of church and state under the Weimar Republic, though the church tax system was retained.[10]

At the same time there was a noticeable rise in withdrawals from church membership. In 1919, 224,015 Protestants became Free Thinkers. In 1920, 305,584 followed them. By 1925 two per cent of the German population registered without church affiliation, and in that year a new wave of withdrawals began.[11]

The Proletarian Free-Thought movement, the sectarians, and the nationalist religion associated with the Young Germanic Faith Movement also threatened postwar Christianity.[12] Although their numbers seemed small they were significant, for, prior to that time, virtually one hundred per cent of the German population registered membership in some church. The centers of withdrawal were the large cities of Prussia and Saxony. In some cases pastors joined the separation movement in protest against the failure of the Church to meet contemporary issues.[13]

It was unfortunate for the Church that Christians were not able to agree upon a workable answer to Germany's

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10 Ibid., p. 84.
11 Ibid., p. 91.
12 Ibid., pp. 90-1.
13 Ibid., p. 92.

problems. Answers from many sources were considered by the German people, and it was inevitable that one solution would eventually gain wide recognition and carry the nation with it. Many Germans were seeking new meaning in life, a new purpose in society. Their faith in the Fatherland was the logical basis for an appeal to them, for it was the only belief to effectively survive. Several men acknowledged this loyalty, incorporating it in their suggestions for Germany's future.

Vestiges of the old Prussianism were evident in such men as Count Hermann Keyserling, who indicated that democracy was only a passing phase which would produce the aristocracy of the future. This pupil of Houston Stewart Chamberlain also favored intuition over intellect and looked upon Christianity as a proletarian religion.[14]

Thomas Mann was equally outspoken in his criticism of contemporary events. He declared that German culture was the conjunction of the West's over-intellectualization and Russia's vital barbarism. He was hostile to Socialism, and found the solution of Germany's political problems in the fusion of such contradictory concepts as democracy and aristocracy, popularity and authority, conservative culture and revolutionary society.[15]

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[14] Butler, The Roots of National Socialism, pp. 232-5.
[15] Ibid., pp. 239-42.

Oswald Spengler, in his Decline of the West, reinforced these arguments. He felt that Western culture was getting old. The future belonged to youths of comparative barbarism.[16] He pictured the German Folk as the race least spent and most likely among white men. He berated Marx for his lack of nationalism, but found some ground for agreement with the Marxian thinking in his consideration of capitalism and wealth as the enemies of Socialism and authority. His identification of Prussianism and Socialism on the basis of their mutual subjection of the individual to the common will was undoubtedly hard for many Germans to understand.[17]

Spengler's opinion of truth was not in keeping with Christian standards, and yet was the working definition for Naziism in its appeal to the Germans during the 1920's and 1930's. He said that truth was what the press says is true for most people.[18] For Spengler this was the only sensible and practical approach. It made plain the need he felt for cold realism instead of ideals, for, to him, ideals were lies.[19]

Another advocate of Folk leadership was Artur Moeller van den Bruck. He succeeded in manufacturing an additional problem for the Germans by inaccurately asserting that their

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16 London, Backgrounds of Conflict, pp. 64-5.
17 Butler, The Roots of National Socialism, pp. 244-9.
18 Ibid., p. 251.
19 Theodor Litt, "The National-Socialist Use of Moral Tendencies in Germany," Baumont et al. (ed.), The Third Reich, p. 449.

population was growing and would need room for expansion. For him the answer to the political question lay in the medieval practice of choosing a protective duke.[20]

Such thinkers, however, did not face the responsibility of rebuilding Germany in the same way as government officials, who were daily confronted with the problems of a defeated nation. The statesman Stresemann saw three tasks for Germany: "the solution of the Reparations question in a sense tolerable for Germany, and the assurance of peace . . . . The protection of Germans abroad . . . .The readjustment of our (Germany's Eastern frontiers . . ."[21] He was one of the many Weimar officials who tried to put Germany back on its feet, with some success. However, complete restoration of Germany to political and economic sovereignty did not come until a strong man - Hitler - appeared with authoritarian solutions to these problems.

Hitler looked beyond equality for Germany to German hegemony.[22] The reparations question was passe for the superior German nation he acknowledged; Germany's position of leadership would automatically result in a suitable (to Germany) settlement of boundary and minority population questions. That this was to be accompanied by peace is

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20 Butler, The Roots of National Socialism, pp. 257-62.
21 Ibid., pp. 266-7.
22 Vermeil, "The Origin, Nature and Development of German Nationalist Ideology in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," Baumont et al. (ed.), The Third Reich, p. 107.

rather unlikely in view of Hitler's glorification of war and physical heroism.

Obviously Hitler's answers were not the answers the Weimar Republic had made. Since the Republic had not satisfied most Germans, it was easy for the Nazis to claim that Weimar had abandoned Germany's national interests.[23] Of course, the Nazis asserted that they had Germany's interests at heart and that Hitler was the long-sought messiah, who would bring about a grand revival of Germany. But, before they could inaugurate the reforms they advocated, the Nazis needed the support of a large number of Germans.

To convince the German people that they had the answers to Germany's difficulties, the Nazis first established a cause for the existing misery. Thus they attributed Germany's defeat to the denial of racial truths, especially as they applied to the Jews.

This explanation utilized the basic Nazi assumption of racial superiority.[24] The racial basis of the Party was evident to anyone who read the Party Program and saw how it viewed national strength and social benefits in terms of citizens' rights - and specified that Jews were aliens.[25]

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23 Litt, "The National-Socialist Use of Moral Tendencies in Germany," Baumont et al. (ed.), The Third Reich, p. 449.

24 Andrew J. Krzesinski, National Culture, Nazism and the Church (Boston, 1945), p. 33.

25 For the Nazi Party program, drawn up by Hitler, Anton Drexler, and Gottfried Feder in 1920, and used as a basis throughout the history of the Party, see Appendix I.

Hitler himself concentrated on political racism and left to Rosenberg, Bergmann and Hauer the job of revising Christianity to make it conform. However, in Mein Kampf Hitler carried his racial beliefs to the point of maintaining that Negroes and Jews were sub-human.[26] Such a conception of racialism and German supremacy was utterly opposite to Christian belief, especially as expressed in Paul's statement: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."[27]

Chamberlain had done much to arouse this interest in the theory of race with his declaration of Teutonic superiority and his strong anti-Semitism. Hitler used the same logic and found the proper application of racial theories could provide the reason for Germany's troubles. He talked disparagingly of "the fathers of the Weimar Constitution, who were themselves in largest part South Germans or Jews anyway."[28] He charged the Jews with responsibility for the revolts of munitions workers and naval officers which had hastened the end of the war in 1918.[29]

To take advantage of the persistent fear of communism, he identified Jews with Marxism. By virtue of the existence

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26 Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf (New York, 1941), p. 908.
27 Paul's letter to the Galations, chapter 3, verse 28 (King James version).
28 Hitler, Mein Kampf, p. 823.
29 Ibid., p. 252.

of Jewish leaders at the top and bottom of German capitalistic society, the Jews were responsible for all the evil in Germany (but none of the good) and became a handy and serviceable scapegoat.[30]

Having established the cause of Germany's multiple woes and, at the same time, set up the formula for a new Germany based upon racial superiority, Hitler made masterful use of propaganda techniques to win over the German people. Expedience was the chief principle in the Nazi appeal.

The Nazis appealed first to the "dispossessed" and the idealists, then stressed "positive Christianity" and equality for all Christians, and later sought "deserving persons" and "voluntary" members as key men. The "dispossessed" were offered food and jobs; the idealists were given the vision of a new and greater Germany; the religiously inclined were promised a realization of Christian principles in action; "deserving persons" were shown opportunities of leadership in the new state; "voluntary" members were admitted to show their loyalty to their Fatherland.[31]

Nazi propaganda used the effective psychological technique of lumping together enemies, which Hitler had suggested in Mein Kampf:

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[30] Means, Things That Are Caesar's, pp. 189-95.
[31] Herman, The Rebirth of the German Church, pp. 117-8.

> It is part of the genius of a great leader to make adversaries of different fields appear as always belonging to one category only, because to weak and unstable characters the knowledge that there are various enemies will lead only too easily to incipient doubts as to their own cause.
>
> As soon as the wavering masses find themselves confronting too many enemies, objectivity at once steps in, and the question is raised whether actually all the others are wrong and their own nation or their own movement alone is right.[32]

These tactics were designed to produce an unquestioning faith in Naziism "through drill to the point of blind obedience, through the inducing of an 'intoxication,' 'hatred,' and even 'hysteria.'"[33]

The nature of the Nazi tactics was such that most educated Germans paid little attention to the movement. As had been customary, the "cultured" class did not involve itself in politics.[34] Until 1930, upper-class Germans did not take Hitler seriously, despite the examples of dictatorships around them. They did not seem to realize that, as changes occurred in political, social, economic and religious ideas, liberal ideas were losing out.

This was related to the instability accompanying industrialization, which had not yet been overcome in Germany.[35] German city growth had typically displayed a lowering of moral

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32 Hitler, Mein Kampf, p. 152.

33 Micklem, National Socialism and the Roman Catholic Church, p. 12.

34 Litt, "The National-Socialist Use of Moral Tendencies in Germany," Baumont et al. (ed.), The Third Reich, p. 448.

35 Gerhard Ritter, "The Historical Foundations of the Rise of National Socialism," Baumont et al. (ed.), The Third Reich, pp. 382-90.

standards and religious life. Secularization and rationalization (even Hitler's pseudo-reasoning) were more popular than faith in God.[36]

The Nazis appealed to this unstable element in the German population with their vision of a great new world. In contrast to Italian Fascism, which was originally rooted in the traditions of empire, church, and family, with religious conformity, Naziism offered a new basis for the social order and morality.[37] It proposed a strictly German Weltanschauung to compete with the Western-Christian way of life.

Evidently many Germans of the late 1920's and early 1930's did not realize the seriousness of the Nazi Weltanschauung in its attack on the fundamental principles to which they adhered. Many were persuaded to go along with the Nazi strong-arm methods because they were willing to compromise on the means if they were convinced of the ends.[38] Since this seemed to be the only movement strong enough to stand up for German interests they felt that it was the movement to be supported. Men like Martin Niemoeller, though not Party members, voted for Nazi candidates.[39]

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36 Ibid., p. 392.

37 Ebenstein, The Nazi State, p. 199.

38 Litt, "The National-Socialist Use of Moral Tendencies in Germany," Baumont et al. (ed.), The Third Reich, p. 447.

39 Ewart Edmund Turner, "The Prisoner of Sachsenhausen," Christian Century, June 28, 1939, 56:818.

It has been established that Hitler expected opposition from the Catholic Church but hoped to reconcile the Protestants; this was probably responsible for the fact that the Catholics were the first to be aware of the dangers of Nazism and to oppose the Nazis, even before they came to power. On September 30, 1930, the Catholic Church first declared its official attitude toward Nazism, when the Bishop of Mainz warned the Catholic faithful by saying that a Catholic "cannot be a registered member of the National Socialist Party" and that a "Catholic who adheres to the principles of the party cannot be admitted to the Sacraments." About six months later, a Bavarian pastoral letter condemned Nazi racial doctrine, citing five errors: the primacy of race over religion, the rejection of the Old Testament and the Mosaic Decalogue, the rejection of Papal primacy, subjection of universal moral law to the criterion of German racial sentiment, the dream of a "National German Church."[40]

The Nazis were not noticeably hampered by such protests. Political, economic, and social conditions were ripe for a radical party which had the physical strength to gain ascendancy. Only when the new way of life was forcefully imposed, after the Nazi Party won control of the National government, did the people as a whole realize the consequences of this ultra-nationalistic doctrine. After Hitler became

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[40] Robert d'Harcourt, "The Roman Catholic Church and National Socialism," The Nineteenth Century and After, July, 1939, 126:64.

chancellor in 1933 the battle lines were more sharply drawn, and miscellaneous skirmishes developed into full-scale war.

CHAPTER III

BATTLE PLANS

By the end of 1932 a large number of Germans had been attracted to the Nazi program and had cast enough ballots for the National Socialist Party to give Hitler a chance at the chancellorship. An understanding of the measures carried out by the Nazis in subsequent years is necessarily based upon familiarity with the principles behind these actions.

It has been suggested that, basically, National Socialism was devoid of any rational principles.[1] The principal rule was evidently expediency. This became increasingly obvious as the Party assumed responsibility, for it then was clear that whoever or whatever agreed with the Nazi way of life was good, though perhaps suspect, and whatever did not agree with Nazi ideas and policies had to be eliminated.

Traditional Christianity did not fit into the Nazi pattern. Christianity's crime against the Nazi way of life was teaching peace and love instead of war and hate.[2] The example of a humble Christ did not satisfy the revolutionary movement which Hitler led. But the Germans' love of order and

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[1] Fraenkel, The Dual State, p. 117.

[2] Viereck, Metapolitics from the Romantics to Hitler, p. 258.

their profound mysticism, was exploited by the Nazis. They felt the necessity of weaning the new generation away from traditional Christianity and, for this purpose, demanded the formulation of a new faith. So Hitler made the leap and broke with traditional morality and Western humanism.[3] In their place he offered a brand of nationalism involving a fierce love of everything German and a violent hatred of everything not German. Although most Germans followed Hitler only in economics and politics, some were converted to his religion of Naziism. These fanatics pictured Hitler as a special agent of God, perhaps the messiah.

Hitler had provided a suitable formula for those who were in doubt as to religious truth:

> 'We know two Gods: one in heaven and another on earth; the second is Germany.' But 'we' are Germany, Hitler had said on another occasion, and 'we' meant 'I!' And so there were people who prayed to Hitler, perhaps without realizing that this was prayer.[4]

Dr. Christian Kinder stated somewhat more explicitly the contribution of the Nazi revolution to German church life:

> Besides knowledge of the conjunction of race and culture, of race and politics, the conjunction of race and religion has been disclosed to us. With one accord we now see how we are tied in our own life and being to the fundamentals of the beliefs of our fathers.[5]

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3 For an interesting account of the ethical standards faithful Nazis gradually accepted see Kurt G. W. Ludecke, I Knew Hitler (New York, 1937), especially pp. 597-600.

4 Konrad Heiden, Der Fuehrer: Hitler's Rise to Power (Boston, 1944), pp. 631-2.

5 Mildred S. Wertheimer, "Religion in the Reich," Foreign Policy Reports, 1936, 11:296.

Hitler encouraged those who found Christianity unsatisfactory by building in the minds of his followers a new concept of God. In one speech he said, "We do not want any other god than Germany itself. It is essential to have fanatical faith and hope and love in and for Germany."[6]

Those who had been looking for a cause to believe in found it in this man, whose self-confidence inspired the trust of hitherto hesitant and insecure thousands. Hitler had confidence in himself as the representative of the true will of the German people. His apparent air of supreme confidence was reassuring to the disillusioned Germans.[7] Many men gave their allegiance, their time, their lives, and their souls in response to the spell created by the Fuehrer's speeches. Frequently, without realizing the extent of their devotion, men joined the Nazi ranks and identified themselves completely with the movement. As these men carried out the Party policies it became evident that the "positive Christianity" favored in the Party Program had little in common with Christianity as it was practiced in Catholic and Protestant churches. When Hitler spoke of God he meant a different God than the God addressed by Cardinal Faulhaber or Bishop Dibelius.

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6 Konrad Heiden, A History of National Socialism (New York, 1935), p. 100.

7 Ritter, "The Historical Foundations of the Rise of National-Socialism," Baumont et al. (ed.), The Third Reich, p. 416.

The religious views of the Austrian Adolf Hitler were greatly perverted by his Germanity. He adopted the German speculative principles previously outlined, and carried each to an extreme. His belief in the rule of the many by the abler few was extended to a conviction that one-man rule was the only effective rule,[8] and he was the man for Germany. He not only recognized that blood was the significant factor in human relationships, but he made racial supremacy the core of National Socialism, asserting that "All that is not race in this world is trash."[9] To him the community was bound by the supreme duty of maintaining racial purity, and a racially pure nation was destined to succeed. "The deepest and the ultimate cause for the ruin of the old Reich was found in non-recognition of the race problem and its importance for the historical development of the people."[10] The society he envisioned would be guided by the Nazi Weltanschauung, which would direct it to magnificent achievements and inspire it to assume its rightful place as the leader of all nations. Racial theory and his Third Reich would no longer be just ideas; they would be the great realities. Hitler worked to evolve a religion in keeping with these ideas, "to preserve the living substance of mankind."[11]

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8 Hitler, Mein Kampf, pp. 750-63.
9 Ibid., p. 406
10 Ibid., p. 388.
11 Fraenkel, The Dual State, p. 120.

Hitler's religious attitudes have been summarized by saying that the Church never meant much to him, so he couldn't see why it should mean so much to others; National Socialism meant everything to him, so it should mean everything to all Germans. This was based on Hitler's assumption that all Germans should be as he was, which was complementary to his belief that all men should be like Germans.[12] This view of Hitler should be qualified by the fact that Hitler recognized the need of a faith to lift man "above the level of an animal-like existence."[13] But he never compromised his aim of giving Germans a religion suitable to his idea of Germanity.

At first it is hard to see how the same man could be responsible for such contradictory statements as these:

> The National Government regards the two Christian Confessions as important factors in the preservation of our nationality. It will respect the treaties made between them and the States. But it hopes and expects that its work for the moral and ethical renewal of the German nation will be equally respected by the Churches. The right of the Churches to cooperate in education will be assured and guaranteed. (March 23, 1933)[14]

And, at another time, "One is either a German or a Christian. You cannot be both."[15]

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12 Herman, It's Your Souls We Want, p. 184.
13 Hitler, Mein Kampf, p. 574.
14 Heiden, A History of National Socialism, p. 327.
15 Hermann Rauschning, The Voice of Destruction (New York, 1940), p. 49.

Hitler was quite clever in his use of propaganda methods. By misleading statements, especially to Catholics, he indicated a desire to promote Christian ideals and institutions. His claims that Naziism was concerned only with worldly reform, which would leave the Church free rein in spiritual matters, fooled many Germans. Such devious techniques were due to his fear that direct action would bring on martyrdom, with its usual outcome of religious regeneration.[16] Rather than speak out against the Church he preferred to let Christianity die a natural death.[17]

Hitler knew what he wanted much better than the Church did, and what he wanted was that every phase of German life should be Nazified. He insisted that fulfillment of a strong Germany was part of God's will for the universe.[18] When the Church did not join him in this faith he asserted his essential anti-Christianity. He did not see any possibility of a synthesis between National Socialism and Christianity, for he acknowledged that pure Christianity was concerned with translating doctrine into facts, which, to his way of thinking, would lead "quite simply to the annihilation of mankind."[19] This would be in direct opposition to his emphasis on the greatness of man, or at least of some men.

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16 Baron, Modern Nationalism and Religion, p. 78.
17 Hitler's Secret Conversations (New York, 1953), p. 49.
18 Micklem, National Socialism and the Roman Catholic Church, p. 7.
19 Hitler's Secret Conversations, pp. 119-20.

He had indicated things to come when he deliberately absented himself from the Evangelical and Catholic services preceding the 1933 Reichstag opening, to lay a wreath on the grave of a fallen Nazi trooper, Horst Wessel.[20]

Snubbing Church services was one manifestation of his belief in the doctrine of racialism. Since he considered "non-recongition of the race problem" the cause of Germany's defeat, he was determined that the new Germany not only recognize race as a factor, but base its entire structure and thinking on the facts of race as he saw them.[21]

Hitler gave the "Aryan" race credit for all that was good in the world. "What we see before us of human culture today, the results of art, science, and techniques, is almost exclusively the creative product of the Aryan."[22] To preserve the progress which had been realized the "Aryan" race had to be preserved in purity. For "all great cultures of the past perished only because the originally creative race died through blood-poisoning."[23] Thus children of mixed racial parentage were inferior. According to Hitler "any crossing between two beings of not quite the same high standard produces a medium between the standards of the parents."[24]

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20 Hitler's Secret Conversations, p. 278.
21 Hitler, Mein Kampf, p. 388.
22 Ibid., p. 397.
23 Ibid., p. 396.
24 Ibid., p. 390.

The "Aryan" race was quite evidently the best race in Hitler's mind. The Jew formed the strongest contrast to the virtuous "Aryan."[25] Hitler claimed that the Jew lived "as a parasite in the body of other nations and States," managing to feed his ego with the labor of others by use of his masterful lying ability.[26]

Hitler's hatred of Jews carried over to anything which he found to be influenced by Jewish thought: International finance, Marxism, or Christianity. Because Christian doctrine maintained the validity of the Old Testament and Christ's birth as a Jew he could not accept it. In its place he exalted Naziism.

Hitler felt that Naziism was far more than a political movement, or even a religion. He considered National Socialism "the will to create mankind anew."[27] However, this high calling was limited, in a sense, by the natural tendencies of man; and, in recognition of these, he saw the need of a religion to serve Naziism. The Nazis looked for the day when "divine services" attended by faithful "God-believing" Nazis would enable people to worship without belonging to any church.[28]

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25 Ibid., p. 412.
26 Ibid., p. 420.
27 Rauschning, The Voice of Destruction, p. 246.
28 W. E. Jackson, et al. (ed.), Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression (Washington, 1946), Vol. III, p. 115.

A comparison between National Socialism and Chrisitanity which appeared in Der Elitz, the publication of a contemporary neo-pagan movement, sheds some light on the ideas associated with the two faiths.

Nazi	Christian
A positive attitude toward life	A negative attitude
Awareness of self	Consciousness of guilt
Pride	Humility
Physical culture	Self-castigation
Wrestling for new knowledge	Reliance on opinions as old as mankind
The seeing mind	Blind faith
Devotion to race and people	Reverence for the idea of mankind
Mastery of earthly life	Absolute priority for religious ideas
Devotion to the "people's community"	Devotion to the hereafter
Vigorous fulfillment of professional duties	Absolute submission to the church
Self-reliance	Dependence on divine grace
Readiness to fight	Peace at any price
Energetic rejection of all that is bad	Unconditional tolerance
Revering of blood and soil	Denial of blood and soil
Unity of people	Doubt in faith
Culture of race	Muddling of race
Elimination of the eugenically unsound	Equal rights of the eugenically unsound
Birth increase of eugenically valuable elements	A fight through celibacy against an increase in these
Rejection of Jewry as hostile to the people	Recognition of the Jews as the chosen people
Rejection of the ancient Hebrew tribal God of Yahweh	Adoration of Him as the Supreme Being
Freedom of creed	A coercive creed
Reliance upon the senses	Religious speculations
Joy in living	Fear of life

Confidence in mastering life through one's own efforts	Distrust of the man in one's self, because of the burden of original sin[29]

Some of the items listed show a striking similarity to the ideas presented by Darwin in his theory of evolution. The struggle which resulted in survival of the most fit creatures was directly related to the ideal of the struggle to maintain racial purity, and these concepts gave force to the emerging Nazi religious outlook.[30]

Racism, the essential philosophy of Naziism, had no direct relationship to any practiced religion, but the mutual denial of the prevailing Christianity by the neo-pagan movements and the Nazis caused them to have much in common. Germany was the only country since the fifteenth century to have influential men seriously suggest adoption of pre-Christian paganism.[31] Naziism's sympathy with this attempt can be seen in the selection of the swastika - a reversed broken cross - as the Party emblem.

Two quotes should help to reveal the extent of Nazi opposition to Christian beliefs. The first was written by Dietrich Ekart, for whom Hitler had much respect, in a 1921 issue of the Volkischer Beobachter, the first newspaper

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29 Ryllis Alexander Goslin, Church and State (New York, 1937), p. 23.

30 Kneller, The Educational Philosophy of National Socialism, p. 185.

31 Ebenstein, The Nazi State, p. 208.

published by the Nazis. The second was a part of a Hitler article which appeared during the 1920's.

> Tear in pieces that lascivious bible of Satanism - the Old Testament!
>
> Luther's translation of the Bible may have been of use to the German language; it irreparably injured the German people's power of judgment. God in heaven! What a cloud of glory now hangs over the satanic Bible! Luther's poetical gifts sparkle so brilliantly that even the defamation of Lot's daughter is enveloped in a vial of religious glamour![32]

The Volkischer Beobachter later became one of the Nazis' most powerful propaganda tools under Rosenberg's editorship. Alfred Rosenberg, a Balt who received part of his education in Russia, might be considered the explosive fuse which, when lit by Hitler, exploded the dynamite of racialism on the German nation. He was not much of an original thinker; he credited Goethe, Herder, Fichte, Ranke, and Treitschke (among others) with molding his ideas.[33] He is generally acknowledged to have been a poor critical scholar; he garbled the ideas of the men he copied. The result was his Myth of the Twentieth Century, which influenced Hitler and served with Mein Kampf as a guide book for Naziism.

Both men supported the policy of separating Church affairs from Nazi affairs in the years of the Nazi rise to power. In Rosenberg's words:

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32 Heiden, A History of National Socialism, p. 99.

33 Rosenberg's testimony as recorded in Trial for the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal (Nuernberg, 1947), Vol. XI, p. 447.

> The earth on which we live has absolutely nothing whatever to do with the Church. With regard to the earth and its affairs National Socialism alone can prescribe for us.[34]

It was easy to see on what terms the Nazis would permit separation.

Rosenberg was violent in his verbal attacks on Christianity, but there was no evidence at the trial following World War II to indicate that he staged any active persecution.[35] His views were held by Hitler to be unofficial, but the fact that his writings were so influential and that he held government offices as a member of the National Socialist Party seems to make the question of the official status of his philosophy relatively unimportant.

In true Nazi fashion, Rosenberg publicized the views which seemed most expedient at the given time. He became increasingly anti-Christian as the Nazi power became greater. He even started with some sympathy for the figure of Christ in the Myth of the Twentieth Century.

His Myth was not a fairy tale, but something which to him was true in a more profound way than science or common sense. It presented a view of human life and nature which was accepted on faith; the truths he declared were designed to inspire social action.[36] In his discourse Rosenberg

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[34] Micklem, National Socialism and the Roman Catholic Church, p. 22.

[35] Trial of the Major War Criminals, Vol. XVIII, p. 121.

[36] Albert R. Chandler, Rosenberg's Nazi Myth (Ithaca, New York, 1945), p. 6.

enumerated the "well-known weaknesses of Christianity," some of which were exaltation of equality, pacifism, cosmopolitan socialism, and general internal corruption.[37] However, he did not condemn Christ. Rather, he discarded the historical belief that Jesus was a Jew and hinted that he might have been an "Aryan." He emphasized Jesus' role as a self-confident master and a born warrior.[38] Christ's Gospel of love was not to be scorned, but love of neighbor had to be subordinated to the ideal of national honor.[39]

Christianity had value if it could be reformed, purified and properly explained, but the Old Testament had to be excluded.[40] After the Old Testament immorality had been deleted and a heroic Christ adopted there would be "positive" instead of the prevailing "negative" Christianity. Incorporation of Nordic religious ideas would free the suppressed Nordic spirit, and "the longing of the Nordic racial soul to give the folkic myths form as the German Church"[41] would be realized.

In the matter of education, which was very important to the organized Church, Rosenberg made the following statement:

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37 Kneller, The Educational Philosophy of National Socialism, p. 197.

38 Ebenstein, The Nazi State, p. 203.

39 Kneller, The Educational Philosophy of National Socialism, p. 198.

40 Kraesinski, National Culture, Naziism and the Church, p. 47.

41 Wertheimer, "Religion in the Reich," Foreign Policy Reports p. 295.

> . . . the prior hypothesis of all German education is recognition of the fact that it was not Christianity which brought morality to us (Germans) but that Christianity owes its lasting values to the German character . . . The German character values therefore are the absolutes which regulate everything else.[42]

Here it was at least partially apparent that Rosenberg really hoped for an essentially non-Christian religion.

Rosenberg could not believe in a God who made the world out of nothing and intervened in its continuing affairs to perform miracles. Instead, he favored the mysticism he had found in his studies of India and the medieval theologian, Meister Eckhart.

The function of the religion he sought would be to strengthen and expand Germanism and to reflect his concept of truth. In this connection, Rosenberg adopted Goethe's maxim: "only what is fruitful is true." Fruitfulness was to be found in the life of the Folk, which was the vital and cultural expression of the external Nordic soul.[43]

He hailed the coming of a new faith based on blood which was to "awaken the soul of a race to life."[44]

> Today a new faith is awakening; the Myth of the blood, the belief that the divine being of mankind generally is to be defended with blood. The faith embodied by the fullest realization that the Nordic blood constitutes that mystery which has supplanted and overwhelmed the old sacraments.[45]

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[42] Ibid., p. 295.
[43] Chandler, Rosenberg's Nazi Myth, pp. 66-79.
[44] Krzesinski, National Culture, Naziism and the Church, p. 50.
[45] Cited in Trial of the Major War Criminals, Vol. V, p. 45.

The new German Church would remove from German life all factors racially foreign to it and promote the development of forces inherent in the race.[46]

He attacked Western-Christian thinking at its roots in his condemnation of individuality.

> Peoples whose health is dependent on their blood do not know individualism as a criterion of values any more than they recognize universalism. Individualism and universalism in the absolute sense and historically speaking, are the ideological concepts of decadence.[47]

Rosenberg sought the death of the Christian Church through Naziism and its activities. He maintained that when "a man puts on the brown shirt he ceases to be a Catholic or a Protestant; he is only a National Socialist."[48] To him this meant that the Nazi did not need or want Christianity.

It appears that Hitler and Rosenberg hoped to divide and conquer; they not only fostered dissension in the Church ranks, but they tried to cut off parts of the Church's body in the hope that the gradual dismemberment would eventually result in its death.

However, more than two men were needed to accomplish this feat. The Nazi officials in their various capacities carried out the cutting off policy by spreading bits of National Socialist theory whenever possible.

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[46] Krzesinski, National Culture, Naziism and the Church, p. 49.
[47] Cited in Trail of the Major War Criminals, Vol. V, p. 408.
[48] Heiden, Der Fuehrer, p. 633.

In 1933 Rudolph Hess, the Deputy Fuehrer, gave a boost to the separation idea by stating that Nazis were not obliged to adhere to any particular religious confession.[49] This seemed innocent enough, but by 1935 he was proclaiming Hitler's exalted role as the man to fashion Germany's destiny. The faith he had in the Fuehrer was such that he claimed Hitler "has always been right, he will always be right."[50]

Hermann Goering, the number two Nazi official, was responsible for comparing the Weimar flag of black, red and gold to the Catholics, Socialists and Jews respectively.[51] He not only dencunced those who stood between Naziism and its goals, but he publicized Hitler as the object of his faith.[52]

The Party propagandist, Paul Joseph Goebbels, made it plain that the only acceptable God was one who would aid the Nazi cause. Goebbels echoed a Prussian general's sentiments: "If God cannot or will not help us, let him refrain from aiding our cursed enemies."[53]

Baldur von Shirach, the young leader of the Hitler Youth, seems to have reconciled in his own mind the claims of the Party and the Church. He and his wife retained their Church membership. He maintained at the Nuernberg trials that he gave Hitler Youth members leave to attend Church and intervened

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49 Herman, It's Your Souls We Want, p. 137.
50 Heiden, Der Fuehrer, p. 758.
51 d'Harcourt, "The Roman Catholic Church and National Socialism," The Nineteenth Century and After, p. 67.
52 Heiden, Der Fuehrer, p. 758.
53 Herman, It's Your Souls We Want, p. 65.

to remedy any abuses, such as objectionable songs, when he heard of them.[54] However, he also made the announcement that simultaneous membership in Hitler Youth and Church youth groups was prohibited on the ground that the Church groups were not staying in their proper sphere.[55] Perhaps he sincerely believed in the possibility he suggested in one of his speeches to the Hitler Youth:

> Just as today a youth group is assembled in this spot which is neither Catholic nor Evangelical but simply German, so will an entire people eventually stand together; a people which is no longer divided into confessions but is united in belief in its leader and its holy mother earth. It is said that such a goal signifies cutting loose from all religion and we are accused of being Godless, enemies of Divine Providence . . . All of us who stand together in this movement know that we are here not to fight against God, but on the contrary because we believe that we are fulfilling the will of God . . . God has commanded us, that we feel to be an eternal truth. Stand together, fight for Adolf Hitler, fight for our German Fatherland. And if you do this, then you are fulfilling God's will.[56]

The Reich Minister for Church Affairs, Hans Kerrl, left no doubt as to his position. In many of his speeches he identified Hitler and National Socialism with the will of God, once stating that Adolf Hitler was the true Holy Ghost:[57]

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[54] Shirach's testimony as recorded in Trail of the Major War Criminals, Vol. XVIII, pp. 443-5.

[55] The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich: Facts and Documents Translated from the German (New York, 1942), p. 89.

[56] Wertheimer, "Religion in the Reich," Foreign Policy Reports, p. 296.

[57] Eugene Lyons, "Dictators into Gods," The American Mercury, March, 1939, 46:267.

Though he asserted that the churches did not need to fear hindrance as long as they did not impede the Nazis, it became apparent that as long as the churches tried to exist as churches they were impeding Naziism. Kerrl asserted that the Nazi state, rather than parents or Church, was responsible for education. The idea that Christianity was based upon faith in Christ as the Son of God made him laugh. The main thing to him was accomplishment of worthy deeds, which the Party was ably demonstrating. As he put it: "The Church has not been able to generate the faith that moves mountains. But the Fuehrer has! The Fuehrer is the herald of a new revelation."[58]

Bernhard Rust, the Reich Minister for Science, Education and Culture, was another official who put Nazi theory into a prominent position. To him, "The whole function of all education is to create a Nazi."[59] Thus it was natural that the school system and the influences on growing children were radically revised and reoriented to point all training influences toward Nazi ideals.

Robert Ley was the head of the world's largest labor union by virtue of the compulsory union membership in Nazi Germany. In one speech to an assembly of Hitler Youth he made the following statements:

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[58] Herman, It's Your Souls We Want, p. 157.
[59] London, Backgrounds of Conflict, p. 112.

> We believe on this earth solely in Adolf Hitler. We believe that National Socialism is the sole faith and salvation of our people. We believe that God has sent us Adolf Hitler.[60]

Possibly "on this earth" was to keep this from conflicting with religion's sphere, but identifying Naziism as the "faith and salvation of our people" doesn't leave much of a sphere for religion.

As such statements became more frequent, it became clear to even casual observors that true Nazis were not interested in coordinating the Church.[61] Instead they tried to silence any Christian voices which spoke against the Nazi program.

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[60] Viereck, Metapolitics from the Romantics to Hitler, p. 289.
[61] London, Backgrounds of Conflict, p. 71.

CHAPTER IV

NAZI OFFENSIVE

The Nazis worked to destroy the Church as an influence in Germany in two important ways. First, they sought a new faith suitable to Naziism and their concept of Germanity to replace Christinaity and the Church. Second, they tried to silence the existing churches or force them into conformity with Nazi ideals.

In the attempt to establish a new religion the Nazi measures went far beyong Bismarck's Kulturkampf, which aimed only at integrating the existing religion.[1] The Nazis maintained that a distinctively German religion, free of international taint, was necessary to ensure the permanence of the German people. In 1933 Hitler did not know what the replacement would be.[2] But Rosenberg had in mind a religion which would exalt the Nordic race. To him, glorification of Germanity was the only justification for the existence of a religion.[3]

The quarrels between the Church and Naziism were a logical result of the Nazi attempt to provide a substitute for the

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1 F. Moulder, "Religion in Germany," The Contemporary Review, June, 1937, 151:683.
2 Rauschning, The Voice of Destruction, p. 51.
3 Krzesinski, National Culture, Naziism and the Church, p. 47.

Church and the fact that the Church had become the only organization not under Nazi leadership. All other groups had submitted. But in a frankly totalitarian system, no rival claim could be permitted to influence the character of individuals or their deeds.[4] For the success of Nazism all of life had to be Nazi, and all German thinking had to be based on the Party's theses of "blood and soil."

Believing this, the Nazis sought an agreeable structure of ritual and religious custom to house their concept of life. It would have been easy to adopt the framework of some already existing religion, if a suitable one could be found. Christianity proved itself unsuitable, but there was some hope in the various neo-pagan faiths which were beginning to assume some stature in Germany.

The Ludendorffs' movement was one of the groups that showed promise of possibly assuming the role of the German religion. To Frau Ludendorff Christianity was a mental disease. Since the Church had failed to bridge the gap between science and faith she set out to provide the needed link. The Ludendorffs hoped to bring back into real life Valhalla and other pre-Christian deities, as they were known in Wagner's operas.[5] The result was the Tannenbergbund, established in 1925 on the tenth anniversary of the World War I victory over the Russians at Tannenberg, in which

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[4] Ebenstein, The Nazi State, p. 200.
[5] Ibid., p. 205.

General Ludendorff had played a major part. This Bund was a military organization dedicated to combating the "supra-national powers" of the Jews, Freemasons, Marxists, and Jesuits (later including all Catholics). In keeping with the ascendant influence of Frau Ludendorff, the role of the woman was emphasized. However, in contrast to what might be expected, the woman was confined to "the three Ks:" Kinder, Kirche, Kueche.[6]

But the Ludendorff brand of religion failed to capture the imagination and allegiance of the German public. So other groups appeared which also competed for the loyalty of the German people.

Ernst Bergmann led a group whose idea of the German religion rested upon nature as the only thing of eternal life and value.[7] In contrast to the general Nazi scorn of intellectualism, Bergmann emphasized knowledge, citing the pagan god of knowledge, Odin, as one of the noblest gods. His religion was not "the international Christ-God who could not prevent Versailles," but "a religion of nature and of life, of the deed and will, of effort and perfection." The solution of moral and religious problems was to be found "in the Cosmos, in nature and the world of reality,

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6 Literally translated children, church, kitchen; F. Whiteleaf, "The Ludendorff Movement," The Contemporary Review, March, 1938, 153:325-9.

7 Kneller, The Educational Philosophy of National Socialism, p. 201.

in blood and soil, people and home, nation and Fatherland." Since man was evolving into God, his religion was a "religion of high faith in man." Belief in a personal God, revelation and salvation was superstition; a God of reward and punishment was a heathen and immoral representation. He proposed a modern imitation of Luther, whom he credited with overcoming degenerated Rome with Christ and the decayed Church with the purified Church.[8]

Another type of faith was suggested by Jacob Wilhelm Hauer, a former Protestant minister who adopted some Hindu principles as a result of his contacts while a missionary in India. When he returned to Germany from his mission abroad he began to work under the Nazis. His new religion rejected a personal God in deference to an impersonal power existing inside and outside the world. This power arrived at its highest consciousness in the life of the German nation.[9] Since Christianity allowed only one possible way to truth and God, it was an alien faith, "basically opposed to the German genius."[10] He could not accept the concepts of sin and penance because he saw no difference between good and evil, except as good corresponded to the will of the nation. Human blood was holy; the conduct of life according to the destiny

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8 Krzesinski, National Culture, Nazism and the Church, pp. 54-8.
9 Ibid., p. 59.
10 Herman, It's Your Souls We Want, p. 63.

of blood was sanctity. In agreement with the Darwinian idea of struggle for existence, faith was the product of an inescapable contest in which victory for the strong was assured.[11]

These ideas tied in with the Nazi attempt to release the suppressed religion of Germany.[12] But, as was true of the Ludendorff movement, they did not capture the heart of the German nation and were not adopted.

Although the Nazis waited and hoped for the appearance of a religion suitable to their ideas, they were not entirely inactive. They soon took the offensive by introducing Nazi versions of Christian practices. Here they stressed action rather than thought, a typical distinction between Nazi procedure and that of the Church.[13] For example, they tried to drive the Church from the social welfare area[14] by means of the remarkably successful and admittedly beneficial program of Winter Help, combined with the one-pot meal to conserve food.

Similarly, they took up the time and notions formerly devoted to Christian ceremonies and functions with activities conducive to the National Socialist way of life.

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11 Krzesinski, National Culture, Naziism and the Church, pp. 59-63.
12 Ibid., p. 54.
13 Kneller, The Educational Philosophy of National Socialism, pp. 246-8.
14 Herman, Report from Christian Europe, p. 54.

In preference to the basic religious manifestations of Christian influence in German life, quite a few substitutes were offered. "Culture halls" in certain places replaced churches as scenes of worship.[15] Secular baptisms became fashionable.[16] A Nazi confirmation service was initiated.[17] Marriages performed in a government clerk's office were made more elaborate in an attempt to make the Christian ceremony superfluous.[18] An organization called Sisters of Hitler was formed. These Hitlerschwestern were noted for their immorality and hatred of Christianity. They replaced crosses with huge pictures of Hitler illuminated by candles and honored the images with liturgical observances.[19] The culmination of such efforts was the National Reich Church, with a Thirty Point program which would have utilized the existing organization of the German Church, substituting Nazi racial principles for Christian doctrines . After this plan had circulated unofficially for several years it came out under Rosenberg's sponsorship in 1942, but it never progressed beyond the planning stage.[20]

Aside from the sacraments and worship other substitutes were also offered. Charity was a weakness to be eradicated

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15 Herman, It's Your Souls We Want, p. 12.
16 Ibid., p. 22.
17 Ibid., p. 27.
18 Ibid., p. 30.
19 Krzesinski, National Culture, Naziism and the Church, p. 111.
20 See Appendix II.

and replaced by governmental programs of help for the needy.[21] The creative power of individuals was to be credited for progress in culture, rather than the creative power of God.[22] Education was transferred from the hands of the priests, who had estranged the youth from the Folk, to the Party leaders, who stressed nature and the sacred German history.[23] Hitler Youth, being the organization for all German boys, removed the need for any other youth groups.[24]

Appeal to the youth was one of the greatest successes of the Nazi movement. Separation of the youth group from any traditional ties inspired a desire on the part of the group for a being of its own. Romanticism appealed to the youth as an ideological basis for their new being, and the Nazis successfully turned this toward nationalistic intolerance.[25] The ideal of serving the nation became the central goal in the lives of most German youth. German girls considered themselves the servants of the state, receiving citizenship only upon marriage.[26] German boys made service to the Nazi state their central goal.

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21 Krzesinski, National Culture, Naziism and the Church, p. 106.
22 Ibid., p. 44.
23 Herman, It's Your Souls We Want, p. 29.
24 The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, p. 92.
25 Litt, "The National-Socialist Use of Moral Tendencies in Germany," Baumont et al. (ed.), The Third Reich, pp. 440-1.
26 Krzesinski, National Culture, Naziism and the Church, p. 45.

In view of such provocation and suggestion it is hardly surprising that songs like the following were taught to and sung by the youth:

> Gone are the days; but the cleric remains
> Who robs our national soul:
> Be he of Roman or Lutheran rite,
> He teaches the Jewish faith.
> Gone are the days of the cross;
> A pillar of sun climbs the heaven:
> At last we shall be free from God -
> Free to sing the praises of the nation.[27]

The Nazis were to a large degree successful in saturating young Germans with these ideas.[28] A wounded German prisoner in France who desperately needed a transfusion refused blood from a French donor saying, "I will not have my German blood polluted with French blood! I would much rather die." And he did.[29]

Many Germans had radically changed their faith. When a young German aviator who had been shot down lay dying, a priest braved bombardment to reach him and offer him the last Christian comforts. He replied, "The Fuehrer is my faith. I don't want anything from your church. But if you want to be good to me, get my Fuehrer's picture out of my breast pocket." The boy kissed the picture as if it were that of a saint

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27 Ibid., pp. 71-2.

28 They received further support from the Nazi legal system. In 1938 a young Nazi broke into a Neuhausen Church, smashed the baptismal font and the altar crucifix, and, at his trial for this destructiveness, said he intended to make a habit of such acts. He was tried in a Nazi court and found not guilty. This incident was recorded in Viereck, Metapolitics from the Romantics to Hitler, p. 259.

29 Ibid., p. 298.

and died happy.[30]

To the public the change was noticeable as the old German death notices stating that the deceased had "died in belief in God" became less frequent, while the notation, "died in belief in Adolf Hitler" became increasingly common.[31]

Such evidences of the Nazi type of faith were supplemented by manifestation of nationalistic intolerance toward conventional practices on the basis of racial superiority. Healthy women were expected to bear children for pure "Aryan" males regardless of moral scruples. The practice of having State children (formerly called illegitimate children) was encouraged by provision of about sixty comfortable and inviting homes for women pregnant under these circumstances.[32]

The policies for reducing the population were as disrespectful toward Christian ethics as the measures encouraging population growth.

The practice of mercy killing, especially as practiced in an arbitrary way by the Nazis, was a direct affront to Christian consciences. Devout Christians favored and supported institutions like Bodelschwingh's Bethel home, where abnormal persons were given special care. They were highly indignant

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[30] Ibid., pp. 298-9.
[31] Ibid., p. 290.
[32] Gregor Ziemer, Education for Death: The Making of the Nazi (New York, 1941), pp. 29-30.

when inmates of these institutions became unwilling victims of Nazi demands for a healthy Germany. Relatives who had entrusted the care of physical and mental invalids to such homes received notices that their loved ones had been transferred to other institutions and "died" shortly thereafter.[33]

The sterilization law was another Nazi attempt to limit the new German population to healthy elements. This healthiness involved both physical and pro-Nazi political vitality. Officially the sterilization law was enacted for "prevention of hereditarily diseased offspring."[34] Nazi officials decided who should be prevented from bearing offspring, and made this a convenient political device.[35]

In addition, the inauguration of sterilization was a direct denial of the Concordat which had been concluded with the Vatican in July, 1933. The agreement with the Catholic hierarchy had been a part of Hitler's early conciliatory policy. For the first few months of his chancellorship, Hitler had tightened his control by maintaining friendship with several Catholic clergymen,[36] enacting moderate legislation, and promoting this Concordat through the sincere efforts of the Catholic Vice Chancellor, von Papen.

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33 Jackson, Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Supp. A, pp. 1050-3.
34 London, Backgrounds of Conflict, p. 101.
35 Wallace R. Duell, People Under Hitler (New York, 1942), pp. 212-30.
36 Heiden, Der Fuehrer, p. 632.

Since similar agreements with the various German states had previously served to protect Catholic interests, the German Catholics had hoped that this Concordat would do the same. The Catholic Church certainly did not gain any new advantages in the terms agreed upon, but it hoped that the provisions guaranteeing freedom of action in most phases of Catholic endeavor would ensure the sustained life of the Church. Freedom of creed and worship, circulation of publications, appointment, continuance of orders, and educational enterprises seemed to safeguard Catholic interests.[37]

However, within a few weeks after the Vatican agreement was signed Hitler permitted the sterilization law to take effect, in direct opposition to the guarantees of Catholic freedom. Other provisions were broken as schools and seminaries were secularized, closed, and confiscated, youth activities severely curtailed,[38] the religious press suppressed, pastoral calling obstructed, and religious services and holiday observances hampered.[39]

Such transgressions were understandable in the light of Hitler's claim that the "Concordat is no more than the survival of agreements reached between the Vatican and the different German States," which with the disappearance of

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37 Ebenstein, The Nazi State, pp. 221-5.
38 Ibid., p. 225.
39 Herman, It's Your Souls We Want, p. 200.

the separate states became obsolete. He considered "the continuation of diplomatic relation with the Vatican redundant."[40] The Concordat was sometimes considered a misfortune, or even a lie.[41]

Actually, the lies which became so common were more frequently the products of the Nazi belief that the criterion for truth was the ability to help the Party's cause.[42] The Christian ideal of truth in the objective sense was abandoned. Instead, posters, mass meetings, friendly newspapers, and radio speeches proclaimed the doctrine of German racial superiority and the necessity of its application to German life, without bothering to note that competent scientists rejected the existence of a German or "Aryan" race.

Popularization of the Nazi concepts of truth, State children, sterilization, and mercy killing served the Nazis in both of their methods of silencing the Church. They encouraged adoption of a new faith and abused the existing Church.

At the Nuernberg trials, the Nazis claimed that only the radicals wanted to destroy Christianity, citing Hitler's reflections on the model character of the Catholic organization as evidence. It is fairly well established that during the

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40 Hitler's Secret Conversations, p. 447.

41 Micklem, National Socialism and the Roman Catholic Church, p. 74.

42 Litt, "The National-Socialist Use of Moral Tendencies in Germany," Baumont et al. (ed.), The Third Reich, pp. 442-3.

war Hitler planned to delay settlement of the Church question.[43] But, before the war it was evident that a definite attempt was being made to weaken the Church, despite periodic statements to the contrary. Rosenberg was speaking sincerely when he said in 1938:

> That the Catholic Church and also the Confessional Church in their present form must disappear from the life of our people is my full conviction, and I believe I am entitled to say that this is also our Fuehrer's viewpoint . . ..Furthermore, the development of our teaching programme in schools of all categories is of such an anti-Christian-Jewish type that the growing generation will be forewarned against the blackcoat swindle.[44]

Students in a training camp were told that when the Party program mentioned "positive Christianity" it did not really mean Christianity, but just a positive religious feeling in general. It wasn't considered wise to say this openly at the beginning.[45] In 1939 Rosenberg commented on the failure of the attempted church coordination by admitting that the Nazis did not have much faith in the undertaking but felt compelled to make the effort for the name of the state.[46]

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[43] Lammers' testimony, Trials of War Criminals before the Nuernberg Military Tribunal: Case No. 11, U. S. vs. von Weizsaecker (Nuernberg, n. d.), pp. 422-7.

[44] Krzesinski, National Culture, Nazism and the Church, p. 112.

[45] Viereck, Metapolitics from the Romantics to Hitler, p. 291.

[46] The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, p. 277.

The Nazi dislike of the Church was a part of the Party's disapproval of anything which was not felt to be strictly German. Christianity, especially Roman Catholicism, was considered to be a product of other nations which weakened the national strength of Germany.[47] Hitler reproached the Catholic Church for its failure to recognize racial duty and national duty, as shown in the Catholic attitude toward sterilization, mission work among the Zulus, and other such activity.[48] Both Protestants and Catholics were "guilty" of missionary efforts which disregarded racial principles. And both faiths were accused of concerning themselves with secondary matters when they should have been concentrating on preserving and strengthening the German race.[49] It was certainly true that far too much Christian energy had been devoted to secondary matters, for the Protestants especially had been quite out of touch with the world. Perhaps the Nazis wished that the Church would make the break between religion and the world complete.

Until his death in 1934, Hindenburg had been a moderating influence on the Nazi program. He was undoubtedly a sincere Christian, though a strong believer in militarism and

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47 Ebenstein, The Nazi State, p. 206.
48 Hitler, Mein Kampf, pp. 607-9.
49 Micklem, National Socialism and the Roman Catholic Church, p. 8.

nationalism. He had backed Hitler's first declarations in the hope that this would bring the country he loved out of chaos.[50] Late in June, 1933, however, Hindenburg's "anxiety for the inner freedom of the Church"[51] prompted a rebuke of Hitler. Temporarily rebuffed and without a definite program of his own, Hitler followed Hindenburg's suggestions. In consequence, a constitution for a Reich Church was formulated as a gesture toward improved relations. This temporary system was headed by more moderate officials working under a modified "German Christian" program.[52] Hindenburg's death removed one of the few remaining obstacles to Hitler's radical policies toward the Church.

The Nazis' attempt to undermine the church from within was greatly aided by the "German Christians" and the inauguration of a Reich Bishop. The "German Christian" movement had begun in 1932 under the leadership of Pastor Hossenfelder, who championed "German" Lutheranism in opposition to "foreign" Calvinism. He was too radical to be accepted by the people, so the Nazis put Ludwig Mueller, a Reichswehr chaplain, in his place. Mueller made some concessions. But when the office of Reich Bishop was created, the Church authorities in Berlin named Pastor Bodelschwingh (son of the

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50 Herman, The Rebirth of the German Church, p. 45.
51 Heidon, A History of National Socialism, p. 329.
52 Heiden, Der Fuehrer, p. 647.

founder of Bethel) to the office. Hitler refused to accept Bodelschwingh. To get around the presence of a non-Nazi leader, he appointed the civil servant Jaegar to the post of "Church Commissar;" Jaegar deposed the clerical officials and made Mueller head of the German Evangelical Church Union.[53] Bodelschwingh was unable to carry out his duties properly and resigned.

In May, 1933, the "German Christians," under Mueller had adopted the following program:

> 1. We insist upon a Reich Church of a dominant Lutheran stamp, in which the Calvinistic churches shall be incorporated but with the preservation of their own character.
> 2. We do not wish a state church, nor a church which is a state within the state, but an Evangelical Reich Church which recognizes the authority of the National Socialist State and which proclaims the Gospel in the Third Reich.
> 3. The Evangelical Reich Church is the church of German Christians, that is, Christians of the Aryan race. In so far is it united with the German Christians abroad. The preaching of the Gospel to foreign racial groups is the concern of foreign missions.
> 4. This newly constituted church shall neither be a refuge of reaction nor a democratic parliamentary debating hall.
> 5. The Evangelical Reich Church shall have the confidence of the people and be led by a Reich Bishop.
> 6. It will be composed of not more than ten church provinces, and at the head of each will sit a provincial bishop.
> 7. Corresponding to the overwhelming majority of the church people, the Reich Bishop shall be Lutheran.
> 8. The Reich Bishop shall have his seat in the Luther city of Wittenberg. He shall be in charge of the Palace Church.

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53 Heiden, A History of National Socialism, pp. 328-9.

> 9. The 31st of October, 1933, is to be set aside as the day for general church elections, when the whole church constituency is to vote upon the new constitution and the person of the Bishop, who is to be nominated from the ranks of the German Christians. All Protestant Church members, according to the official government voting regulations, shall be eligible to vote. Excluded from eligibility are Christians of non-Aryan extraction.[54]

The elections, preceded by prejudiced campaign regulations, resulted in the election of Mueller as Reich Bishop. But he worked without the support of the majority of Protestant clergymen and church members.

Though he tried to fulfill the duties of his office, as he saw them, Mueller was in an impossible position. In 1934 his National Synod abolished the church flag, completely merged all formerly independent churches with the Reich Church, and required pastors and church officials to swear an oath jointly to Hitler and the Reich Bishop's administration.[55] In practice, this was more talk than reality. Such measures seemed only to increase the hostility of the Church. Each attempt to gain ground for Nazism caused some of the majority group, which sought a workable relationship, to decide that cooperation was not possible. Mueller formally held the office of Reich Bishop for several years, but he became less and less effective as he failed to solve

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[54] Means, Things That Are Caesar's, pp. 223-4.
[55] Wertheimer, "Religion in the Reich," Foreign Policy Reports, p. 300.

the problem of bringing German Protestantism under Nazi control. The Party, as well as the general public, gradually ignored him. The "German Christians" lost prestige and power as they were torn by divisions within.[56] Very little mention was made of them after 1936.

Mueller's futile measures were only a part of the official effort to control the Church. Many regulations, not specifically limiting Church activities, were used to curb both Protestant and Catholic influence.

The repressive measures against the Church were based on the leadership principle, which was essential to totalitarian Naziism. According to the Nazi concept of the Fuehrer, Hitler represented the soul of Germany on all matters. He was the embodiment of man's religious response to destiny, and disloyalty to his will was evil.[57] Therefore, anyone who opposed Nazi measures was considered a political enemy, and was held to be criminal in his attitude toward the state. As Ernst Fraenkel, a Berlin lawyer, saw the situation, the Nazi treatment of political crimes was a fraud. Special Nazi courts made political crimes out of questions of law,[58] and, by their perversion of justice, used their political theory as legal truth to justify their attacks on Christianity.

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[56] Ibid., p. 299.

[57] F. Gregoire, "The Use and Misuse of Philosophy and Philosophers," Baumont et al. (ed.), The Third Reich, pp. 706-9.

[58] Fraenkel, The Dual State, p. 50.

Generally the Nazis used four method of control: Hitler terror (secret police, concentration camps, etc.), monopoly of avenues for influence of public opinion, the power of appointment to public office, and indoctrination of the young.[59] They did hesitate to use violence to achieve their aims. Murder and robbery were considered heroic deeds when committed for the Nazi cause.[60] Those who went to the police in protest against breaches of the commonly accepted law by youth groups, SA men, etc. found that the police would do nothing to stop or punish the offenders. The Essen police headquarters had a banner over its entrance stating that "the police stand by the Hitler Youth."[61]

In direct opposition to the convictions of certain Christians, conscientious objectors were not tolerated.[62] Sects like Jehovah's Witnesses and the Christian Scientists

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59 Means, Things That Are Caesar's, pp. 203-5.

60 Krzesinski, National Culture, Nazism and the Church, p. 71.

61 The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, p. 105.

62 A woman sympathetic to the Jehovah's Witnesses applied for a peddler's permit. The request was denied by the Bavarian Administrative Court which supported its refusal by the following argument: "Although no proof has been offered that Maria S. is a member of the forbidden association, . . . it has been shown that she is a warm sympathizer . . . .She has also refused to promise that she would not work on behalf of the association in the future . . . .This mode of thought and the diffusion of such thinking is dangerous to the state . . . since it defames both state and church, alienates people and state and renders aid to pacifism, which is an ideology irreconcilable with the heroic attitude characteristic of our nation today." Quoted in Fraenkel, The Dual State, p. 53.

offered passive resistance to the Nazis and were consequently outlawed and dispossessed of their property.[63] The Nazis treated members of these groups in a manner comparable to their disdain of the Jews.[64]

The clergy of the established churches, especially the priests and nuns, were ridiculed and defamed in trumped-up morality cases, alleged currency smuggling, and other exaggerated or even entirely false accusations, made for the purpose of breaking down the honor and prestige associated with the Church. When laws and regulations governing the church press, as well as pressure on printers and other indirect yet very effective control measures, became oppressive, pastors tried to use the pulpit to defend themselves and speak out against Nazi evils, but found that, as time went on, their sermons were censored.[65]

In July, 1934, Minister of the Interior Frick decreed that public discussion in assemblies, the press or pamphlets of the question of unification of the Protestant Churches was prohibited.[66] Meanwhile, parades publicized the pagan

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63 Ibid., p. 117.
64 Ebenstein, The Nazi State, pp. 215-6.
65 Theodore Maynard, "Catholics and the Nazis," The American Mercury, October, 1941, 53:394.
66 John B. Holt, Under the Swastika (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1936), p. 178.

faiths.[67] Sale of the Bible and rental of rooms for church purposes was officially banned.[68]

As early as December, 1935, the Ministry of Propaganda had libraries of falsified evidence which it was preparing for use in the morality cases against the clergy.[69] During 1940, the lack of common honesty was such that Goebbels doctored some documents to make them indicate that the German Catholic hierarchy had made a pronouncement in Hitler's favor.[70]

As a part of the attempt to subdue Christianity, the Nazis tried to make active Church participation very inconvenient, permitting mass only at awkward hours.[71] Church radio broadcasts were abolished, as were essentially all public affairs of Christian significance.[72] A 1937 order by Reich Minister Kerrl prohibited the practice of reaching from the pulpit the names of persons resigning from the Church, thus making withdrawal easier.[73] Protestant delegates

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67 Krzesinski, National Culture, Nazism and the Church, p. 71.
68 Herman, The Rebirth of the German Church, p. 53.
69 Prince Hubertus Loewenstein, "The Nazis and the Vatican," The Contemporary Review, November, 1938, 154:576.
70 Maynard, "Catholics and the Nazis," The American Mercury, p. 394.
71 Ibid., p. 394.
72 The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, pp. 206-18.
73 Herman, It's Your Souls We Want, p. 160.

to the international conference at Oxford in 1937 were denied passports at the last minute.[74]

The State had a major weapon in its hands by virtue of the Church's dependence on the tax system; the Nazis threatened to discontinue this basic source of revenue if the clergy did not conform. At the same time the weaknesses and degeneracy of the Church were loudly publicized by posters, songs, public demonstrations, cartoons and caricatures, dramatic performances, and films.[75] Most of the time the clergy had to just sit by and let such attacks go unanswered if they wished to retain their livelihood.

Lists of forbidden books, book burnings, and revision of library training after 1937 limited severely the opportunities to read any neutral or anti-Nazi literature.[76]

Education was generally taken from the hands of the Church and put into the hands of the Party. Racial purity, political reliability, and six months' service in a labor camp, as well as scholarship, were required for admission to the universities.[77] During the first three years of the Nazi regime fourteen per cent of the university professors

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74 Viereck, Metapolitics from the Romantics to Hitler, p. 283.
75 The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, pp. 264-84.
76 Ebenstein, The Nazi State, pp. 129-31.
77 London, Backgrounds of Conflict, p. 113.

were dismissed for political and religious reasons.[78] The total number of college and university students was cut in half by six years of Nazi rule.[79] Theological training was particularly hard hit as the limitation of theological faculties was tied in with the study of new subjects based on racialism.[80]

According to Dr. Krieck, Headmaster of the Mannheim schools, "The task of the universities is not to teach objective science, but the militant, the warlike, the heroic."[81] This denial of the Western-Christian concept of truth was evident throughout the Nazi educational system.

In the grade schools and high schools methodical secularization took place. On December 12, 1937, Reichsleiter Rosenberg denied to the Church the right of education,[82] but long before that the Church had lost most of its traditional control over training the German youth. Teachers were compelled to join the Nazi League of German Teachers, led by a former strom trooper. Even the arithmetic examples were calculated to engender the Nazi spirit.[83] Not knowledge, but the development of the strong will would enable the Germans to prosper.[84] The Adolf Hitler Schools were established in 1937

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78 Ebnestein, The Nazi State, p. 173.
79 Ibid., p. 165.
80 Letter from Bormann to Rosenberg, Jackson, Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Vol. III, pp. 166-7.
81 Clara Leiser, Lunacy Becomes Us, (New York, 1939), p. 48.
82 Herman, The Rebirth of the German Church, p. 56.
83 Ebenstein, The Nazi State, pp. 150-1.
84 I. L. Kandel, The Making of Nazis (New York, 1935), p. 63.

to attract the cream of German youth and give them a thorough indoctrination in the ways of Naziism.[85] These formal educational efforts were combined with the youth movements to give maturing Germans a complete education without provision of time to cultivate family life[86] or be alone to think things through individually.[87]

Early in the attack on the Church the youth had been wooed by the Nazis. On December 22, 1933, the Evangelical Youth leader had been dismissed by Mueller and the 700,000 members signed over to Hitler Youth, under a temporary arrangement by which they belonged to both groups.[88] The Catholic Youth were hampered in their customary marching and pilgrimmages, in an attempt to deprive confessional groups of the activities most appealing to youth.[89] In the summer of 1935 a definite attempt was made to link the Communist International to the Catholic Youth Associations.[90] the time of the young people was so filled with required

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85 Ziemer, Education for Death, p. 154.

86 In 1937, the Municipal Court of Frankfurt a. M. - Hoechst deprived a mother of the custody of her child because she wished to educate her in a Catholic convent. In 1938 the Municipal Court of Wilsen placed several children in a foster home because their father had not enrolled them in the Hitler Youth movement. "In this case the father kept his children out of the Hitler Youth and thereby abused his right of custody of his children." Excerpts from Fraenkel, The Dual State, p. 56.

87 Ebenstein, The Nazi State, p. 158.

88 Holt, Under the Swastika, p. 176.

89 The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, p. 90.

90 Ibid., p. 92.

non-religious activities, and the coercion and temptation to join Hitler Youth and similar organizations so great that many found it expedient to abandon the Catholic groups.[91] The strong appeal to youth was the logical outgrowth of the Nazi assumption that children were the property of the State.[92]

Teaching religion in confessional schools was curtailed in the early years, frequently as a prelude to their conversion to public schools.[93] This was a natural result of the Nazi assumption that the issuing of National Socialist directives for teaching religions classes would be based on the impossible synthesis of National Socialism and Christianity.[94] The Catholics were particularly troubled by confiscations of schools, as well as of monasteries and other Church property.[95]

Men who wanted to keep their jobs were confronted with orders like that of the Mayor of Wurzburg, who required:

> . . . the names of those officials, employees, and workmen in permanent employ whose children belong to denominational youth groups . . . .Every official, employee, or workman in permanent employ is to send a written statement that his children do not, or will no longer, belong to any association of either denomination.[96]

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91 Ibid., p. 90.
92 Krzesinski, National Culture, Nazism and the Church, p. 71.
93 Herman, The Rebirth of the German Church, p. 56.
94 Letter from Bormann to Rosenberg, Jackson, Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Vol. III, p. 153.
95 Evidence cited in Trial of the Major War Criminals, Vol. XI, pp. 462-6.
96 The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, p. 99.

In 1935, clergymen were deprived of the right to exercise control over their own affairs by Kerrl's decree that "church associations or groups" were not to exercise administrative functions, appoint pastors or other holders of spiritual offices, examine and ordain theological candidates, issue instructions or announcements from the pulpit, levy or administer church taxes, or issue instructions for collections, on penalty of having their churches dissolved.[97]

The longer the Nazis were in power the more obvious their true aims were and the more strongly were they carried out. Especially after 1937, the Nazis looked for weaknesses in the Church so that they could benefit from factionalism.[98]

Throughout the Nazi period anyone who had any association with Christian ventures risked severe persecution. Before 1938 there had been at least 7000 cases in which representatives of churches had been charged by the police with offenses against the government.[99] Of the 18,000 officiating pastors in 1933, 1300 had been arrested during the first five years of the Nazi regime.[100] In 1937 alone, 806 members of the Confessional resistance were arrested.[101]

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97 Wertheimer, "Religion in the Reich," Foreign Policy Reports, p. 301.

98 Herman, The Rebirth of the German Church, p. 64.

99 A. S. Duncan-Jones, "The Church Conflict in Germany," The Contemporary Review, February, 1938, 153:158.

100 Baron, Modern Nationalism and Religion, p. 147.

101 Herman, It's Your Souls We Want, p. 156.

Imprisonment meant either an uncomfortable jail like Alexanderplatz in Berlin or the horrors of concentration camps. Notorious drunkards, criminals and abnormal cases were selected for guard duty at the concentration camps.[102] According to American sources, about 800 Catholic priests and 300 to 400 Protestant ministers died at Dachau alone.[103]

With the outbreak of the war, ministers were called as regular soldiers and deliberately sent to the front lines. Up to April, 1942, 698 of the 7000 clergymen called into service had been killed.[104] Nine out of ten priests in the Germany Army were not chaplains, and, by order of September, 1942, they were not even permitted to carry mass kits or administer pastoral care, except in emergencies.[105] The employment of one chaplain for each 10,000 Wehrmacht soldiers was not even kept up as the war progressed;[106] the Luftwaffe had no chaplains, though it permitted clergymen who were regular members to minister on occasion.[107]

After trying to make over Christianity via the "German Christian" movement, to bully the Church by constrictive measures, and appear conciliatory in formation of a coordinating

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102 Rauschning, The Voice of Destruction, p. 82.
103 Hans Rothfels, The German Opposition to Hitler, (Hinsdale, Illinois, 1948), p. 42.
104 Ibid., p. 44.
105 Herman, It's Your Souls We Want, p. 204.
106 Ibid., p. 204.
107 Ibid., p. 205.

committee under the respected Dr. Zoellner,[108] the Nazis in 1937 had given up their role as "mediators." A document dated February 15, 1938, contained the exact directives for smashing the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches by use of Himmler's Security Service.[109]

Between these efforts and those directed at establishing a competing religion which would embody the Nazi concepts, the Church had a real struggle for survival.

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108 Duncan-Jones, "The Church Conflict in Germany," The Contemporary Review, p. 160.

109 Herman, The Rebirth of the German Church, p. 64.

CHAPTER V

CHRISTIAN COUNTER-ATTACK

The Nazis had varying degrees of success in their attempt to silence the German Church. Some Christians accepted the Nazi ideology almost without exception; others were unalterably opposed to National Socialism. Most Germans retained their Church membership, but compromised on Nazi demands involving points which seemed comparatively minor.

To understand the reaction of the German Church to an openly anti-Christian government, it is necessary to realize the effect of territorial, operational and doctrinal differences within German Christianity. For example, the Protestants welcomed the early fights between the Nazis and the Catholics, before they realized the essential nature of Naziism. Among Protestants there were additional lines drawn by territorial boundaries and confessions, despite the general unity of the German Evangelical Church federation formed in 1922,[1] which included the Reformed and Lutheran churches.

Differences among Christians were minimized as the Nazi offensive progressed. The several groups found common cause

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[1] Means, Things That Are Caesar's, p. 215.

in their conviction that the essentials of Christianity were being threatened. The Nazis made it clear that any questioning of the National Socialist philosophy was "political,"[2] and punishable as such. Though most pastors found it necessary to do as the government ordered, the Protestant Confessional group was able to arouse, for a time, considerable resentment against Nazi rule. By 1938, however, popular interest waned as most clergymen and laymen wearied of the fight, and thought it more practical to devote themselves to the difficult task of working under the existing government to promote the general well-being of the German people.[3]

Many did not resist the Nazi offensive at all. This lack of resistance to Nazi policies can be ascribed to various factors. Some believed in the "German Christian" idea; moderates hesitated to speak in the time of stress; some had been duped to fear the Bolshevists more than the Nazis; a few did not understand the ultimate goals of Naziism; many were poorly informed of what happened beyond the borders of their local district.[4]

The biggest single group to choose the "German Christian" answer was the Church of Thuringia, where the recent merger

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2 Micklem, National Socialism and the Roman Catholic Church, p. 55.

3 Herman, It's Your Souls We Want, p. 175.

4 Hugh Martin, Douglas Newton, H. M. Waddams, R. R. Williams, Christian Counter-Attack: Europe's Churches Against Naziism (New York, 1944), p. 42.

of small areas and the heavy industrialization had produced instability. The "German Christians" modified the Christian creed by demanding that ministers be full-blooded Aryans and that they take an oath of the Fuehrer as the head of the Church. Nazi ideology was placed above the New Testament and church creeds, and the Old Testament was dropped altogether.[5] By the end of 1933 about one-sixth of Germany's Protestant pastors accepted these changes.[6] Obviously this meant rejection of some basic Christian beliefs, and most German Protestants could not accept this answer, despite the wishes of their government.

The attempt to forcibly impose these conditions gradually caused Protestants to see the need of organized opposition. For this reason a group called "Gospel and Church" was formed, which, by September, 1933, included 2000 pastors. At that time it expanded and was renamed the Pastors' Emergency League.[7] This group, which by November numbered 7000,[8] sent the government a protest to Mueller's regime signed by 6000 clergymen.[9] In May, 1934, the temporary League was converted into the Confessional Synod of the German Evangelical Church, working under six "evangelical principles:"

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5 Herman, The Rebirth of the German Church, pp. 24-5.
6 Ebenstein, The Nazi State, p. 209.
7 Wertheimer, "Religion in the Reich," Foreign Policy Reports, p. 298.
8 Ibid., p. 299.
9 Herman, The Rebirth of the German Church, p. 49.

> 1. Jesus Christ, as He is revealed to us in the Holy Gospel, is the only word of God . . . The heresy is refuted that the Church can and must recognize in addition to this one word, other events and powers, figures and truths as the revelation of God.
> 2. God, through Jesus Christ, claims one's whole life. The heresy is refuted that there can be spheres of life in which we do not belong to Him, but to other masters.
> 3. The Christian Church is a community of brethren and belongs solely to Christ. The heresy is refuted that the Church can do with its mission and its organization as it likes and surrender it to the vagaries of temporarily prevailing philosophical and political convictions.
> 4. The offices of the Church are not there to give one man dominion over another . . . The heresy is refuted that the Church can and should give itself, or allow itself to be given, leaders endowed with ruling powers.
> 5. The Gospel tells us that the state has the divine task of looking after law and order in a world not yet delivered . . . The heresy is refuted that the State, over and above its special task, should and can become the single and total regulator of human life and thus also fulfill the vocation of the Church. The heresy is also refuted that the Church, above and beyond its own special task, should assume State characteristics, State tasks, and State dignities and thereby itself become an organ of the State.
> 6. The mission of the Church . . . consists in the preaching to all people . . . the message of God. The heresy is refuted that the Church can place the word and works of the Lord at the service of any arbitrarily chosen wishes, aims, and plans.[10]

Most German Protestants felt that the Confessional attempt in November, 1934, to establish itself as the legitimate representative of the Evangelical Church in Germany was

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[10] Wertheimer, "Religion in the Reich," Foreign Policy Reports, pp. 299-300.

justified but indiscreet.[11] Whether or not the attempt was warranted, it brought a sharp Nazi reaction that resulted in a series of arrests and threats, and an extension of the very abuses that had been denounced.[12]

The Confessionals replaced the traditional stress on the pure preaching of the Gospel and proper administration of the sacraments with a new emphasis arising from the needs of the times. There is reason to believe that this produced a more vital Christianity, for the people learned to give serious thought to their religion and make decisions determining their day-to-day conduct on this basis. Herman quotes Power's Religion in the Reich on the reaction of German Protestants to Mueller's consecration as Reich Bishop:

> Meanwhile throughout the whole of the rest of Protestant Germany that morning the churches were packed. They had come together to pray for the true Christianity that was being threatened by a false. They heard their pastors inveigh once more against a "hybrid Nordic Christian religion." Never before in history can the nominal head of a Church have been solemnly invested with the trappings of his high office while the vast majority of his followers were gathered elsewhere praying that their Church might be saved from his activities! It was a peculiar situation.[13]

After Mueller's failure to rally the German Protestants under Hitler's leadership, Reich Minister Kerrl appointed

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11 Herman, It's Your Souls We Want, pp. 143-4.
12 Ibid., p. 145.
13 Ibid., p. 142.

Dr. Zoellner, of Confessional inclination, to head a representative committee of the Protestant groups whose goal would be to evolve an acceptable compromise. But the Confessionals who met in 1936 could not see any possibility of compromise with Naziism's philosophy of race, blood and soil, and refused to acknowledge the legality of the committee as a policy-making body.[14] Dr. Zoellner was too strong a Christian to permit the solution the "German Christian" members advocated, and the final attempt at cooperation failed.

From that time on, the activities of the Confessionals and all who sympathized with them were in open conflict with Hitler's wishes. Most of the opposition consisted of carrying on regular Church duties despite the many obstacles furnished by Nazi ingenuity. The Confessionals also waged a counter-attack with repeated protests against de-Christianization, immorality, and illegality in Nazi measures, by means of letters to high officials and communications to the Church members to show how the conflict was being fought in its various stages.[15]

When the outbreak of war seemed imminent before "Munich" a special order of prayer was prepared invoking God's protection for Christians of all nations. The State declared that by this action the Confessionals had been guilty of lack

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[14] Ibid., pp. 147-9.
[15] Herman, The Rebirth of the German Church, p. 70.

of confidence in Ribbentrop's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and made certain that the men responsible for it did not exhibit further "lack of confidence."[16]

Naturally the Church's protests against the Jewish pogroms were not well received, and served to increase existing friction.[17] The Protestants as well as the Catholics adhered to the Pope's statement that "Anti-Semitism in inadmissable. We are spiritually Semites."[18]

As the German nation became involved in war, the Church preferred silence to any statements of encouragement or discouragement. In 1941 Hitler gave the Church a chance to "redeem" itself by bestowing an official blessing on the war effort at the outset of the Russian campaign, but the Church refused.[19]

However, in 1943, a Day of Repentance was proclaimed by several Confessing Synods at which a pointed recapitulation of the Ten Commandments was circulated.[20] In 1944 the Church spoke out especially clearly in its wartime definition of "thou shalt not kill," which limited legitimate state killing to the execution of criminals and slaying of enemies in warfare.[21]

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16 Ibid., p. 86.
17 Ibid., p. 70.
18 Maynard, "Catholics and the Nazis," The American Mercury, p. 397.
19 Herman, The Rebirth of the German Church, p. 101.
20 Ibid., p. 71.
21 "German Churchmen Denounce Nazis," Christian Century, August16, 1944, 61:941.

From the time of the Nazi accession to power, numerous pastors were prosecuted in Nazi courts. Martin Niemoeller, who was imprisoned in 1937, was only one of these, but his case became widely known, and was to a large degree typical. He had been a U-boat commander in World War I and had fought for the nationalistic Free Corps after the war.[22] He had supported the Nazi ticket and welcomed Hitler's victory in a 1933 sermon, as had Bishop Dibelius of Berlin[23] and many other clergymen, who saw in Naziism the hope of restoring Germany to prosperity. But Niemoeller soon discovered that Naziism was putting race and nation above God. This was directly opposed to his belief that truth was supreme and must be placed above race, nation or even the Church.[24] On this basis he could not go along with the government, and he worked to make the Pastors' Emergency League and the Confessional Church the champions of the true Christianity. He realized that the talk of deconfessionalizing the Church was really aimed at depriving people of both their Church and their Christianity.[25]

He had known Mueller during the war and did not respect his concept of Christianity. In direct contradiction to

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22 Ebenstein, The Nazi State, p. 210.
23 Baron, Modern Nationalism and Religion, p. 146.
24 Martin Niemoeller, God Is My Fuehrer (New York, 1941), pp. 144-5.
25 Martin Niemoeller, "Lift Up a Standard," Christian Century, July 21, 1937, 54:921.

Mueller's "German Christians" he maintained the integral nature of the Old Testament in Christian belief.[26]

In July, 1937, he was seized by the Gestapo. After a lengthy delay he was tried in February, 1938, for "misuse of the pulpit." The minor charge on which the court finally convicted him imposed a sentence shorter than the time he had laready served. But, as he left the courtroom, the Gestapo seized him again and put him in the first of a series of concentration camps.[27]

Otto Dibelius, who had been a Church Superintendent, was not imprisoned, but he was severly restricted in his activities. Although he had been one of the first deprived of the right to preach or speak publicly he continued to work silently,[28] feeling that the German guilt was greater for continuing to participate in Hitler's regime after the implications of Naziism were realized.[29]

Among the Reformed clergymen, Karl Barth was noted for his stand against Naziism. He disagreements with the Nazi government eventually made him unwilling to remain in Germany. He wrote a pamphlet entitled "I Say No," which aroused considerable interest; in it he expressed the

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26 Turner, "The Prisoner of Sachsenhausen," Christian Century, p. 818.
27 Ebenstein, The Nazi State, p. 211.
28 Norman, The Rebirth of the German Church, p. 26.
29 Ibid., p. 68.

dissatisfaction of a clergyman who "fears God more than men."[30] He could not accept the Nazi leadership principle in Church matters;[31] he also rejected the new concept of the Reich Bishop and the idea of Aryan exclusiveness.[32] In his theology he centered on the majesty of God, and stressed the preaching of the pure Gospel as the sole task of the Church.[33] His thinking on the Nazi problem produced a paradox in his way of viewing the Church and the world. As he himself expressed it, the conflict between the Church and the Nazis caused him to become more "worldly" while becoming more "churchly."[34]

During the war Hanns Lilje was one of the Confessional leaders who assumed duties which could no longer be carried out by the men who had first undertaken them. He was kept busy with lectures and public meetings as the spiritual hunger of the people became evident. But he too was seized in 1944 and held without explanation or process of trial for some months. In his account of his own experiences he tells of the unfair trials, the "demonic" art of questioning, prisoners' isolation, physical discomforts, lack of consideration on the part of most guards, and the occasional soft

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30 Heiden, A History of National Socialism, p. 331.
31 Wertheimer, "Religion in the Reich," Foreign Policy Reports, p. 299.
32 Means, Things That Are Caesar's, p. 236.
33 Karl Barth, "How My Mind Has Changed in This Decade," Christian Century, September 20, 1939, 56:1134.
34 Ibid., p. 1132.

spots among the men in charge. He reveals the nature of Nazism in action and the type of stamina required to stand up against it.[35]

Another Protestant leader who spoke out during the war was Bishop Wurm, whose protests were acknowledged by Rosenberg at the Nuernberg trials. He singled out the Nazi practice of mercy killing for special comment. Even though he tried to arouse the self-interest of the Nazis, and ended his letters with the loyal "Heil Hitler!" he was generally ignored.[36]

The militants of the Confessional Church were almost entirely pastors,[37] though many laymen were aware of what was happening. To speak out, however, was to invite persecution, so most learned to save their emotions for whispered discussions behind closed doors.[38]

Those who dared to oppose the Nazi rule found a variety of activities through which they could thwart the destruction of German Christianity. Some Christian laymen gave financial assistance to secret seminaries[39] and other projects. As necessity arose some assumed pastoral duties.[40]

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35 Hanns Lilje, The Valley of the Shadow (London, 1950), pp. 34-100.
36 Martin, Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Supp. A, pp. 218-24.
37 Rev. Charles S. Macfarland, "Hitler or Christ: The Fate of Christianity in Germany," The American Mercury, September, 1939, 48:5.
38 Herman, It's Your Souls We Want, p. 250.
39 Herman, The Rebirth of the German Church, p. 28.
40 Martin et al., Christian Counter-Attack, p. 42.

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Pastors and laymen learned to work together effectively. Before the war the care of Christian Jews awaiting the opportunity to emigrate was undertaken by a special committee headed by Pastor Grueber, who was later executed for this activity.[41] Laymen also joined their pastors in praying for peace rather than victory, as the Nazis expected them to pray.[42]

Men like Dr. Goerdeler, the former mayor of Leipzig, and Count Moltke, son of Bismarck's General Moltke, found that their Christian convictions were very important as they realized the errors of Naziism and sought to evolve a plan for a better Germany. Goerdeler's main basis for leading efforts in opposition to the government was the necessity he felt of restoring basic human values.[43] As he spearheaded cooperation among the resisting groups he envisioned the replacement of Naziism with a "Democracy of the Ten Commandments."[44] He was imprisoned for his part in the unsuccessful attempt on Hitler's life, July 20, 1944; from his cell he made this plea: "May the world accept our martyrdom as penance in behalf of the German people."[45]

Similarly, Moltke and other leaders of German society felt compelled to resist both spiritually and concretely.

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41 Herman, The Rebirth of the German Church, p. 89.
42 Herman, It's Your Souls We Want, p. 178.
43 Rothfels, The German Opposition to Hitler, p. 86.
44 Ibid., p. 118.
45 Ibid., p. 158.

Before the war Moltke did not consider belief in God to be essential for an anti-Nazi stand. But as the war progressed he decided that right ethical principles were not enough, and he stressed the Christian faith.[46]

Through the Kreisau Circle, which met at Moltke's home, many top Germans were confronted with the need for and possibility of replacing Hitler. They came up with a plan of Christian Socialism for Germany satisfactory to both laymen and clergy of Catholic and Protestant faiths, who worked together to formulate it.[47]

One of the promising members of the Kreisau Circle was Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a budding theologian who performed international missions on behalf of the resistance. At a secret Church meeting in Geneva during 1941 he said: "I pray for the defeat of my nation. Only in defeat can we atone for the terrible crimes we have committed against Europe and the world."[48] With his lawyer brother Claus, he was active in the conspiracy,[49] and was arrested after the July 20 failure. Bonhoeffer was one of the many victims of drunken guards, being killed by intoxicated SS men shortly before the arrival of American troops at Flossenburg concentration camp.[50]

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[46] Ibid., p. 118.
[47] Allen Welsh Dulles, Germany's Underground (New York, 1947), pp. 68-94.
[48] Ibid., p. 116.
[49] Rothfels, The German Opposition to Hitler, p. 141
[50] Ibid., p. 116.

The Army was given positive evidence of the continued life of Christianity by confessional tracts and other religious publications sent to servicemen by their home pastors.[51] Major General von Rabenau was a subject of Nazi criticism because of his disdain of Nazi "scientific" explanations, and his lectures based on the continuing validity of the Church and expectation of eternal life.[52]

Other individuals followed their convictions in a number of ways. An unnamed young pastor gave the following reason for serving in the Army as a private: "I would rather serve in the infantry as a common soldier than preach the sort of message that would be expected of me as a pastor."[53]

Resisting Christians could be mentioned among regular Army officers, woman pastors, clergymen, government officials, professors, trade unionists, and business men, who witnessed to their faith even in times of persecution. Booksellers generally complied in displaying Nazi literature but kept theological tracts, classics and translations of foreign works available in the back rooms for the sizeable number of people who wanted them.[54] In 1939, the Bible was still outselling Mein Kampf by 200,000 copies per year.[55]

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51 Jackson, Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Vol. III, pp. 147, 161.
52 Ibid., Vol. III, pp. 109-11.
53 Herman, It's Your Souls We Want, p. 251.
54 Rothfels, The German Opposition to Hitler, p. 36.
55 Herman, It's Your Souls We Want, p. 180.

Catholics were involved in these activities in much the same ways as the Protestants. Their efforts were perhaps better organized, in keeping with the stronger ties of authority in the Catholic Church.

Several groups of Catholics demonstrated the possibility of reversing Nazi mass techniques. A Nazi district leader in Oldenburg was not able to stem the tide of revolt at a meeting designed to make acceptable the removal of crosses from schools.[56] Christian students in Muenster sang religious songs and thereby prevented Hauer from making a scheduled speech in 1935.[57]

Individuals were also active. Hans and Sophie Scholl, who were university students, strongly voiced their disapproval of the Nazi program for students by pamphlets and other literature prepared in conjunction with the Catholic periodical Hochland. Both gave up their lives for their agitation.[58]

Count Preysing, the Catholic Bishop of Berlin, had been one of the first to call attention to the fundamentals of the conflict by his assertion of the Nazis' desire to silence the Christian witness.[59] The Catholics felt the bite of Nazism

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56 Charles E. Howitt, Jr., "Cross vs. Swastika: An Episode," The American Mercury, October, 1939, 48:248-9.
57 Krzesinski, National Culture, Nazism and the Church, p. 67.
58 Rothfels, The German Opposition to Hitler, p. 12.
59 Duncan-Jones, "The Church Conflict in Germany," The Contemporary Review, p. 166.

before the Protestants, since Nazism had its start in a Catholic area. Realizing the danger, the Catholic hierarchy had instructed Catholics to vote only for Christian candidates in the 1933 elections. But most Catholics did not heed the warning,[60] and the Nazis gained power.

Having already expressed its opinion of Nazism, the Catholic Church was then confronted with having to live with it. Vice Chancellor von Papen, who was the principal stockholder in the largest Catholic newspaper in Germany,[61] felt the dilemma quite keenly and was happy for the opportunity of arranging the Concordat with the Vatican. However, as noted previously, this was an ill-fated optimism.

Cardinal Faulhaber, who led the opposition to secularization of the confessional schools of Bavaria asked "Why have a Concordat if it is not kept? We were hanged without the Concordat, and with the Concordat we are first drawn and quartered and then hanged."[62] He also protested the vilification of the Pope which the Nazis carried on through the press, the theater, pamphlets, and books. In a sermon on the subject, he acknowledged the divine origin of State order, but he also asserted the divine origin of the ecclesiastical order, asking Catholics not to betray their Church.[63]

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60 Martin et al., Christian Counter-Attack, p. 22.
61 Ibid., p. 22.
62 Herman, It's Your Souls We Want, p. 194.
63 "Cardinal Faulhaber Condemns Nazi Calumnies," The Catholic World, October, 1942, 156:108.

Count von Galen, Bishop of Muenster, was perhaps one of the most outspoken Catholic clergymen dealing with the Nazi treatment of the Concordat. He frequently utilized it and the various Papal encyclicals in public protests against Nazi persecution. When his diocesan paper, as well as other channels for distributing information, was suppressed, he used his sermons to reply to Nazi threats.[64]

Generally, the Catholics used the same types of resistance as the Protestants: conference declarations, appeals to the consciences of their members, persistence despite increasing obstacles, protests to Nazi officials, etc. Their opposition was focused on the Nazi insistence upon racial purity, enforcement of sterilization and mercy killing, criticism of celibacy and the monastic orders, denial of the doctrine of the immaculate conception, secularization of education, and worldly attitude toward marriage.

Although they were somewhat divided in their reception of Nazi ideas, they had no sizeable group parallel to the "German Christians." This was related to Hitler's respect for the Catholic organization and consequent unwillingness to attempt a coordination similar to that tried with the Protestants.

But the associated organizations were quite definitely urged to submit to Nazi rule. The strong programs of the

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64 Micklem, National Socialism and the Roman Catholic Church, p. 179.

Catholic Youth and the Journeymen's Associations resisted Nazi penetration as long as possible.[65] But violence became common, and there was essentially no law to which they could appeal for help.

Despite these examples of resistance, it is generally conceded the Christianity was feeble in its opposition. To a large extent the Christians permitted the Nazis to proceed with their secularization of all phases of German life without offering more than token resistance. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was one of many who eventually were seized by a sense of personal guilt for their failure to stand by their convictions. He found "no room for expediency" in the realm of Christian living.[66] Goerdeler's request that the world accept the martyrdom of resistance leaders "as penance on behalf of the German people" was indicative of the same burden of sin. The Germans faced the gross destruction of human lives which had been perpetrated by their government hardly believing it could be true, but yet knowing it was so and that they by their acquiesence had a share in it.[67]

At the Nuernberg trials, the prosecutors of the International Tribunal did not condemn the Nazis for their

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65 Ebenstein, The Nazi State, p. 191.
66 Rothfels, The German Opposition to Hitler, p. 46.
67 Guenter Rutenborn, a German pastor, caught this spirit in his postwar play, The Sign of Jonah, which he wrote for his parish but found popular enough to be given a long run on West Berlin's "Broadway."

anti-Christian ideology, but for their persecution of others believing differently than themselves.[68] Many Germans suffered under the Nazi regime's refusal to tolerate non-Nazi ideas. However, the measures taken against Christians were not entirely detrimental to the Christian cause. They inevitably sharpened the faith of the sincere believers, while weeding out some of the dead wood in the Church.

Christian solidarity was much greater when Christians were in opposition to the government than it had been before the Nazi regime.[69] The unity among Christians was evident in the increased cooperation between Catholics and Protestants. In 1941 a letter from a German pastor to an American friend intimated that German Lutherans and Catholics had found much common ground in matters of doctrine and sacraments, though not in organization.[70] Their working cooperation could be seen in the fact that a Catholic publishing house produced the first books on the Protestant resistance to Hitlerism. Immediately after the war interconfessional relations were probably the best since the Reformation.[71]

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68 John P. Kenny, Moral Aspects of Nurenberg (Washington, D. C., 1949), p. 53.

69 Rothfels, The German Opposition to Hitler, p. 46.

70 Douglas V. Maclean, "Interfaith Relations in Germany," Christian Century, June 11, 1941, 58:783.

71 A possible exception to the era of good feeling was the relationship between the Free and State churches, because the Free churches cooperated with the Nazi attempt to undermine State churches. Herman, The Rebirth of the German Church, pp. 35, 37-8.

This Christian solidarity engendered the first recovery of lost ground for Christianity since the nineteenth century.[72] It was emphasized in the new stress upon identifying the Church with the community, in order to make Christian living a reality.[73] "Radical experiments in Christian behavior" replaced the previous emphasis on eloquent preaching and obscure theological discussions. Clergymen were keenly aware of the need of avoiding the prewar aloofness of the Church.[74]

The ultimate effect of Nazi influence goes beyond the scope of this paper. However, it seems obvious that the general result for the life of the Christian Church and its members was to make them cognizant of their shortcomings and require that they mend their ways or give in to the forces of an alien faith and way of life. The Nazis presented German Christianity with a challenge demanding a demonstration of the backbone and stamina required of a dominant influence on culture. The continuing response of the Church and its people to this challenge will do much to determine the future of Europe and Western civilization.

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72 Rothfels, The German Opposition to Hitler, p. 45.
73 Herman, Report from Christian Europe, pp. 184-5.
74 Ibid., p. 13.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX I

The Program of the

National Socialist German Workers Party

1. We demand the union of all Germans in a Pan German state in accordance with the right of all peoples to self-determination.
2. We demand that the German people shall have equal rights with those of other nations; and that the Treaties of Versailles and St. Germain shall be abrogated.
3. We demand space (colonies) for the maintenance of our people and the settlement of our surplus population.
4. Only those who are our countrymen shall be citizens of our State. Only those who are of German blood can be considered as our countrymen regardless of creed. Hence no Jew can be regarded as a fellow-countryman.
5. Those who are not citizens of the State must live in Germany as foreigners and must be subject to the law of aliens.
6. The right to choose the government and determine the laws of the State shall be the privilege only of the citizens. We therefore demand that no public office, of whatever nature, whether central, local or municipal shall be held by any but a citizen of the State. We actively combat the demoralizing parliamentary administration whereby posts go by Party favour without regard to character and capability.
7. We demand that the State shall undertake to ensure that every citizen has a fair chance of living decently and of earning his livelihood. If it proves impossible to provide food for the whole population, then aliens (non-citizens) must be expelled from the State.
8. Any further immigration of non-Germans must be prevented. We demand that all non-Germans who have come into Germany since August 2, 1914, shall be forced to leave the realm immediately.
9. The rights and duties of all citizens shall be the same.
10. The duty of every citizen shall be to work mentally or physically. No individual shall carry on any work that is deleterious to the community, but shall contribute to the benefit of all.
Hence we demand:
11. That all unearned incomes shall be abolished, BREAKING THE BONDAGE OF INTEREST.

12. In consideration of the tremendous sacrifices of property and life which every war imposes upon the people, all personal gains resulting from war must be regarded as treason to the nation. We therefore demand that the returns from all war-profiteering shall be forfeited down to the last farthing.
13. We demand that the State shall take over all trusts.
14. We demand that the State shall share in the profits of large industries.
15. We demand that provision for the aged shall be made on a very greatly increased scale.
16. We demand the creation and maintenance of a sound middle class; that the large stores shall be immediately communalized and rented cheaply to small tradespeople; that for all public supplies, whether national or local, preference shall be given to small traders.
17. We demand an agrarian reform suitable to our national requirements; the enactment of a law to expropriate without compensation the owners of any land that may be needed for national purposes; the abolition of ground rents; and the prohibition of all speculation in land.
18. We demand that relentless measures shall be taken against any who work to the detriment of the public weal. Traitors, usurers, profiteers, etc., are to be punished with death, regardless of race or creed.
19. We demand that the Roman law which serves a materialist ordering of the world shall be replaced by German Common Law.
20. In order to make it possible for every capable and industrious German to obtain higher education and thus the chance of rising to important posts, the State shall organize thoroughly the whole cultural system of the nation. The curricula of all educational establishments shall be arranged according to the requirements of practical life. The conception of the State Idea (the science of citizenship) shall be taught in the schools from the very beginning. We demand that specially talented children of poor parents, no matter what their station or occupation, shall be educated at the cost of the State.
21. It is the duty of the State to help raise the standard of the nation's health by providing maternity welfare centers, by prohibiting juvenile labour, by increasing physical fitness through the introduction of compulsory games and gymnastics, and by the greatest possible encouragement of all associations concerned with the physical education of the young.
22. We demand the abolition of the professional army and the formation of a national army.

23. We demand that legal action be taken against those who propagate what they know to be political lies and disseminate them by means of the Press. In order to make possible the creation of a German Press, we demand that:

a) All editors and their assistants on newspapers published in the German language shall be German citizens.

b) Non-German newspapers shall require the express consent of the State to publication. They must not be published in the German language.

c) Non-Germans shall be forbidden by law to have any financial interest in or in any way to influence German newspapers. The punishment for transgression of this law to be the immediate suppression of the newspaper in question and the deportation of the offending aliens.

Journals transgressing against the common weal shall be suppressed. We demand that legal action be taken against any tendency in art or literature having a disruptive effect upon the life of the people, and that any organizations which offend against the foregoing requirements shall be dissolved.

24. We demand freedom for all religious creeds in the State, in so far as they do not endanger its existence or offend against the moral or ethical sense of the Germanic race. The Party as such represents the standpoint of positive Christianity without binding itself to any one particular confession. It opposes the Jewish materialist spirit within and without, and is convinced that a lasting recovery of the nation can only be achieved from within on the principle, THE GOOD OF THE STATE BEFORE THE GOOD OF THE INDIVIDUAL.

25. In order that all this may be carried out, we demand the creation of a strong central authority in the State; the unconditional control by the political central parliament of the whole State and all its organizations; the formation of professional committees, and committees representative of the several estates of the realm, to ensure the laws promulgated by the central authorities being carried out in the individual States in the union.

The leaders of the Party undertake to promote the execution of the foregoing points at all costs, if necessary at the sacrifice of their own lives.

Munich, February 24, 1920.

APPENDIX II

The Thirty Point Church Plan

1. The National Reich Church of Germany categorically claims the exclusive right and the exclusive power to control all churches within the borders of the Reich; it declares these to be the national churches of the German Reich.
2. The German people must not serve the National Church. The National Church is absolutely and exclusively in the service of but one doctrine: race and nation.
3. The field of activity of the National Church will expand to the limits of Germany's territorial and colonial possessions.
4. The National Church does not force any German to seek membership therein. The National Church will do everything within its power to secure the adherence of every German soul. Other churches or similar communities and unions particularly such as are under international control or management cannot and shall not be tolerated in Germany.
5. The National Church is determined to exterminate irrevocably and by every means the strange and foreign Christian faiths imported into Germany in the ill-omened year 800.
6. The existing churches may not be architecturally altered as they represent the property of the German national culture, and to a certain extent the historical development of the nation. As property of the German nation they are not only to be valued but to be preserved.
7. The National Church has no scribes, pastors, chaplains, or priests, but National Reich orators are to speak in them.
8. The National Church services are held only in the evening and not in the morning. These services are to take place on Saturdays with solemn illumination.
9. In the National Church German men and women, German youths and girls will acknowledge God and His eternal works.
10. The National Church irrevocably strives for complete union with the state. It must obey the state as one of its servants. As such it demands that all landed possessions of all churches and religious denominations be handed over to the state. It forbids that in the future churches should secure ownership of even the smallest piece of German soil or that such be ever given back to them. Not the churches conquer and cultivate land and soil but exclusively the German nation, the German state.

11. National Church orators may never be those who today emphasize with all tricks and cunning, verbally and in writing, the necessity of maintaining and teaching Christianity in Germany. They not only lie to themselves but also to the German nation, goaded by their love of the positions they hold and sweet bread they eat.
12. National Church orators hold office as government officials under civil service rules.
13. The National Church demands immediate cessation of the publishing and dissemination of the Bible in Germany as well as the publication of Sunday papers, pamphlets, publications, and books of religious nature.
14. The National Church declares that to it, and therefore to the German nation, it has been decided that Fuehrer's Mein Kampf is the greatest of all documents. It is conscious that this book not only contains the greatest, but that it embodies the purest and truest ethics for the present and future life of our nation.
15. The National Church has to take severe measures in order to prevent the Bible and other Christian publications being imported into Germany.
16. The National Church has made it its sacred duty to use all its energy to popularize the coeternal Mein Kampf and to let every German live and complete his life according to this book.
17. The National Church demands that further editions of this book, whatever form they may take, be in content and paginations exactly similar to the present popular edition.
18. The National Church will clear away from its altars all crucifixes, Bibles, and pictures of Saints.
19. On the altars there must be nothing but Mein Kampf (to the German nation and therefore to God the most sacred book) and to the left of the altar a sword.
20. The National Church speakers must during National Church services propound this book to the congregation to the best of their knowledge and ability.
21. The National Church does not acknowledge forgiveness of sins. It represents the standpoint which it will always proclaim that a sin once committed will be ruthlessly punished by the honorable and indestructible laws of nature and punishment will follow during the sinner's lifetime.
22. The National Church repudiates the christening of German children particularly with water and the Holy Ghost.
23. The parents of a child must take only the German oath before the altar. This oath is worded as follows: The man: "In the name of God I take this Holy oath that I (name), the father of this child, and my wife, are of proven Aryan descent. As a father I agree to bring up this child in the German spirit and as a member of the German race."

The woman: "In the name of God I take the Holy oath that I (name) bore my husband a child and that my husband is the father of this child and that I its mother am of proven Aryan descent. As a mother I swear to bring up this child in the German spirit and as a member of the German race." The German diploma can be issued only to newly born children on the strength of the German oath.

24. The National Church abolishes communion and religious education as well as the confirmation, the religious preparation for the communion. The educational institutions are and remain the family, the schools, the Hitler Youth, and the Union of German Girls.

25. In order that school graduation of our German youth be given an especially solemn character, all National Churches must put themselves at the disposal of German youth. The Hitler Youth day will be on the Friday before Easter. On this day only the leaders of these organizations may speak.

26. The marriage ceremony of German men and women will consist of taking an oath of faithfulness and placing the right hand on the sword. There will not be any unworthy kneeling in the National Church ceremonies.

27. The National Church declares the tenth day before Whitsunday to be the national holiday of the German family.

28. The National Church will not tolerate the establishment of any new clerical religious insignia.

29. The National Church rejects the customary day of prayer and atonement. It demands that this be transferred to the holiday commemorating the laying of the foundation stone of the National Church.

30. On the day of its foundation the Christian cross must be removed from all churches, cathedrals, and chapels within the Reich and its colonies, and it must be superseded by the only unconquerable symbol of the Hakenkreuz (swastika).

NAZI INFLUENCE ON CHRISTIAN LIFE IN GERMANY

by

JANET WILKINS

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The thesis that Naziism influenced Christian life in Germany is based on the comprehensive nature of National Socialist doctrine. The Nazi Weltanschauung was more than a plan to make Germany a political power. This new way of life went beyond the usual political movements to suggest a new set of ethics and loyalties. The concept of race, which was the central factor in all Nazi policy and action, was radically opposed to the Western-Christian ideals which had been basic to German life and culture.

Naziism had strong roots in German history, for elements of its pattern of thought were evident in the theories of Fichte, Herder, Nietzsche, Wagner and other nineteenth century thinkers. The Englishman Houston Stewart Chamberlain was largely responsible for drawing together (in quite unscholarly fashion) the "contributions" of these men into a system of thought and action.

Christianity had been a part of German life since the days of the Roman Empire. The Reformation of the sixteenth century had left it divided and politically oriented, as the state church became the accepted religious institution. To a great extent, the Church was isolated from the main stream of German life, as the emphasis was upon sacramental purity and doctrinal accuracy.

When Germany was defeated in World War I a period of crisis and confusion ensued. Christianity was found lacking

in its appeal to the German people, and a new answer to the perplexities of modern political, social, and economic phenomena was sought. Naziism emerged as the best answer, making primary use of the German love of the Fatherland.

Once they were in power, the Nazis asserted their essential anti-Christianity in their emphasis on race, disregard of individuals and their sense of morality, and distortion of truth. These characteristic traits stemmed from the thinking of Adolf Hitler and Alfred Rosenberg, whose belief in the superiority of the "Aryan" race was basic.

Under totalitarian Naziism, conflicting ideologies were not tolerable, and, when the Church refused to conform, it was attacked. The Nazis worked in two ways to destroy Christian influence. First, they tried to produce a competing religion on the Nazi bases of race, blood and soil. Second, they tried to destroy the Church itself, using the "German Christian" movement to work from within Protestantism.

The Church was inadequate in resisting Nazi pressures, though certain individuals were outstanding in refusing to be forced into the Nazi mold. The early Catholic resistance and the later Protestant Confessional efforts were the principal organized forms of opposition.

The conflict pointed up glaring weaknesses in the Church and, at least temporarily, improved relationships among Christians. The immediate postwar period indicated a renewal

in German Church life which showed possibilities of reasserting the legitimacy of the strong Christian influence on Western civilization.